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In Aqbat Jaber and Ain al-Sultan

Israeli Bulldozers Level Refugee Homes

by Sami al-Aboudi

Israel is once again striking at the heart of the Palestinian national cause by attempting to erase evidence of the very existence of the more than two million Palestinian refugees.

Israeli authorities demolished thousands of homes in the only two remaining refugee camps in the Jericho area from the years before 1967. The two Jericho camps — Ain al-Sultan and Aqbat Jaber — have long been poignant symbols of the sufferings of Palestinians forced to flee their homes twice in 1948 and in 1967.

Residents of the two camps came largely from villages in the Lydda, Ramleh and Jaffa areas which were destroyed after 1948. More than 60,000 refugees were concentrated in Aqbat Jaber alone. Most of the inhabitants of both camps either fled or were driven across the Jordanian border when Israel occupied the West Bank in 1967.

Thirty Israeli army bulldozers embarked at dawn November 13 on the camps' demolition. Palestinian observers see the move as part of Israeli preparations to empty the vital Jordan Valley of its inhabitants in order to retain control in case of a future political settlement.

Eyewitnesses said that a large number of Israeli troops stood by as the bulldozers ram-

Israeli bulldozers tear into the mud walls of refugee homes in Aqbat Jaber.

paged through the vacant mud houses levelling them to the ground. The operation lasted until the afternoon. UNRWA officials were present to make sure that only vacant homes would be demolished.

Preparations for the demolition were carried out one week ago when UNRWA officials notified residents that the agency's headquarters in Vienna represented by outgoing Commissioner-General Olof Rydbeck signed an agreement with the Israeli authorities to demolish all unused houses in both camps. The agency assured residents that only unused houses would be demolished. Some refugees said they voiced opposition to the move and demanded that it not be carried out.

The camp *mukhtar*, a government-appointed official, known as Abu Kamal told *Al Fajr* that he was not consulted beforehand concerning the planned demolition. "I learned about it along with the rest of the camp residents from UNRWA officials," he said. His daughter, a teacher at Ain al-Sultan school, who declined to give her name, said that the Israelis have repeatedly tried to get her father to approve the demolition but he refused.

Earlier UNRWA workers had marked the houses used by refugees with red paint in order to avoid having them demolished once the bulldozers began destroying the unused shelters. Residents told *Al Fajr* that each family tried to save as much as possible from the camp by marking houses which they use as barns for their animals. UNRWA, however, carried out a second marking in a different color, after the Israelis complained that what was left for demolition was too little.

According to a statement issued on November 13, UNRWA explained that the agency approved the demolition after they were given assurances that structures in the camps used by local residents, garden plots and all UNRWA installations would not be damaged. The statement also said that UNRWA will retain the camp land for future use. UNRWA's West Bank Regional Director, Peter Hopkins, told Israel TV on November 13 that

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Military Panel Upholds Deportations

The Israeli Military Objections Committee upheld November 11 the Israeli West Bank military commander's orders to deport three West Bank men. Another committee in Gaza recommended the deportation of a fourth Palestinian from Gaza last week.

The Israeli High Court issued an order *nisi*, November 13, blocking the deportation until the court hears the lawyers' appeal against the deportation. The Israeli High Court hearing is a last resort for the deportees.

The four men — al-Bireh municipal council member, Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi; Bethlehem journalist, Hassan Abd al-Jawad; unionist Ali Abu Hilal from Abu Dis village near Jerusalem; and ex-political prisoner Zaki Statieh from Gaza — were arrested two weeks ago in preparation for deportation on charges of incitement.

Hassan Abd al-Jawad and Ali Abu Hilal began an open hunger strike also November 13 to protest their planned deportations, Israel Radio said. *Al Ittihad* Arabic daily, which also ran the story, said that Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi was unable to join the hunger strike because of poor health. The fourth man slated for deportation, Zaki Statieh, is held in a separate prison.

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Arafat Renounces 'Terror'

by Said al-Ghazali

After lengthy discussion with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat renounced November 7 terrorist acts whether they be carried out by states or individuals. He, however, asserted the Palestinian people's right to use armed struggle in the Israeli occupied territories to put an end to the occupation.

Arafat made the statement in response to pressure from the United States, Egypt and Jordan to renounce terror after the Italian ship affair. Arafat said last week that the PLO was not responsible for the hijacking of the ship and that Abu al-Abbas had planned the hijacking on orders from the Arab countries attempting to embarrass the PLO so that it would be left out of the peace process by charges of terrorism. Sources in Amman said that Arafat has pledged to look into the affair and punish Abu al-Abbas if he is found guilty of masterminding the affair.

The controversial statement, which has come to be known as the Cairo Declaration, triggered varied reactions. Jordan's King Hussein described the declaration as a "positive step," while the Damascus-based Palestinian factions of the PLO opposed it saying it represented a termination of the state of war between the PLO and Israel.

Arafat's announcement came at the end of a three-day official visit to Egypt. In his statement he asserted the Palestinian people's right to fight

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PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak observe an aerial show of new Mirage 2000 jetfighters

Is Israel on the Brink of Civil Strife?

News Analysis
by Baher Ashhab

In February, 1983, an Israeli Likud sympathizer hurled a grenade at a group of Peace Now activists who gathered in front of the Israeli Prime Minister's office to demand the implementation of recommendations by the commission investigating Israeli complicity in the Sabra and Shatila massacres. The recommendations included the resignation of the then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon. One peace activist was killed and seven others injured in the attack.

Jewish settlers, who at the time were participating in a counter-demonstration in support of the then-Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Sharon, stood between ambulances and the wounded in an effort to prevent medical teams from performing first aid. Later a group of thugs drove to the hospital where the wounded were taken and attempted to attack them but were prevented by police.

To many this incident was the first sign that civil strife in Israel was imminent. Given increasing tension, some of which is quite recent, the situation in Israel today is reminiscent of a period in Jewish history nearly 2000 years ago when dissension among the Israelites during the "Great Revolt" against the Romans brought on the destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the Jewish tribes. Today such dissension in Israeli society is also partly the result of incompetence on the part of Israeli politicians who have not yet found a just end to their war with the Palestinians and the Arabs. Given such official incompetence, it may not just be the "Arab threat" which will bring about the fall of the Zionist establishment.

Rumors of War

Writing in a weekly newspaper known to be read by more than 10,000 settlers in the West Bank, an unidentified settler said, "Let every one prepare himself mentally to stand up in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, and to raise his hand — and his weapon — against his brother. [If the occupied territories are returned], most means will be justified."

In response, a left-leaning, youth newspaper, distributed in most high schools in Israel, published a few days later a notice reading, "I'm ready to raise a hand against opponents of peace, on condition that Arab leaders extend a hand in peace... If necessary, I am willing to take up the gun."

The Israeli defense minister was quick to ban the settler newspaper outright and to ban the other from all schools but not before the issue became the hottest item for debate in Israel in a long time. After the ban announcement, leaders of the 50,000 or so Israeli settlers in the occupied territories declared in defiance that the concept of civil strife may not be so far-fetched. Following a seven-hour meeting on November 8, the settler leaders published a statement in which they urged civil disobedience in case the Israeli government moves in a direction that would undermine the *status quo* of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza. They said they would consider any government that gives back the occupied territories "illegal" and would deal with it accordingly.

Some of the measures reportedly discussed in their meeting include returning their military reserve cars and refusing to pay taxes or serve in the army. Reports say they even went further and compared any Israeli government who would return Arab land for peace with the Vichy government of Marshall Petain. Petain, who collaborated with the Nazis in World War II was executed by Charles De Gaulle. The settlers reportedly suggested the same fate could meet Israeli politicians who desire a compromise with the Arabs.

Fearing a government clampdown, settler leaders met again several days later and issued a softer statement saying their call for civil disobedience was meant to be taken "philosophically and and not literally".

Similar threats of civil rebellion were made during the Camp David talks and the evacuation of Israeli settlers from the Sinai, but the settlers' power base was less than one-fifth then what it is today. According to Meron Benvenisti, the settlers are today able to provoke civil disobedience or even civil war. They have grown into a well-armed, well-financed lot with enough political influence to change the *status quo* of political affairs in Israel.

The Israeli left-wing camp has much to fear from the settler movement which considers those who advocate the return of the occupied teritories equally as despicable as the local Palestinian population. The grenade attack on the protesting Peace Now group is one example of their hatred toward leftist Israelis. Last year, Israeli intelligence uncovered a large arms cache stored by the settlers in the Golan Heights. It not only contained light weaponry, which is freely provided to the settlers by the Israeli army, but also enough hand grenades, plastic explosives and the like to arm a small battalion.

Frequent suggestions were made that several arms caches still exist and that several paramilitary training schools are operating throughout the West Bank and Gaza. "There is some justice to our fear that some day the extremists in Israeli society will turn against me and others who advocate a Palestinian state in the occupied territories," says Hebrew University Professor Yehoshua Libowitz. "They call us traitors," he said.

The left-wing camp's fears have been further fueled by signs of increased alliance between the settlers and Meir Kahane's Kach movement whose influence on the thinking of the settlers is becoming evident. Kahane, who is currently behind a draft bill that was to exclude all Arabs from Israeli citizenship, has on several occasions threatened that liberal Israelis could face the same fate as the Arabs, if he has his way. [The Knesset refused this week to discuss Kahane's bill.] Last year, his Kach movement infiltrated the settler movement in Hebron and managed to gain an equal share of seats on the Kiryat Arba council. The result was the expulsion of all Arab laborers from the settlement.

Official Reaction

Israeli parliamentarians from the left and the right seem no less concerned with the prospects of civil war. Some have said they even advocate it if the Israeli government takes action in opposition to their views. Tehiya MK Rabbi Waldman told the Israeli public in a broadcast last week that, "I, too, warn that if any land is given up, blood will be spilled." His partner in the Tehiya Party, MK Geula Cohen, predicted that "moral and not civil law should apply in such a case."

The Likud which currently shares the government with the Labor Alignment is reported to be financing a trip to the United States by the activist settlers Gush Emunim to gather American support against Shimon Peres' recent peace initiative. The Gush Emunim secretary, who heads the crusade, was reported to have told a group of conservative US senators that should any land concessions result from Peres' initiative, Gush Emunim will spearhead a resistance movement. The settler trip is sponsored by an organization called Americans for a Secure Israel which is said to enjoy the patronage of Deputy Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens.

Israel's prime minister, meanwhile, has kept a low profile over settler provocations and the actions of the extreme right. He is perhaps more embarrassed by them than anything else. It was his Labor Party that first allowed the settler drive to engulf the occupied territories, now only to see them turn against him. Benvenisti and Professor Libowitz argue that the Labor Party which fuels the settlers is able at any time to pull the plug on them. But considering the fact that the Labor Party will transfer power to the Likud after a year they say that now is the time to stop the settlers.

The fact that Peres is taking no steps at quelling the settlement drive clearly indicates that his 'peace' moves are nothing but a political game by which he is merely gaining time until the tide drifts in Israel's favor. The settlers, Kach and other extremists are meanwhile gaining much ground and seem to be determined to get things their way, even if it means civil war.

FBI: JDL Killed Alex Odeh

The Jewish Defense League was behind the bombing that killed Palestinian activist Alex Odeh in Los Angeles last month, according to a US Federal Bureau of Investigation statement November 8.

A statement by the FBI spokesperson in Washington said that the bombing of the office of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, of which Odeh was regional director, remains under investigation, but that "it has been classified as a terrorist attack attributed to the JDL". This statement was the first indication of progress in the four-week investigation to determine who placed the bomb apparently triggered by a tripwire when Odeh opened the door of his office on the morning of October 11. No arrests have yet been reported.

The bombing occurred the morning after Odeh said in a television interview that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was a "man of peace" because of his role in ending the hijacking of the Italian ship *Achille Lauro*.

The JDL national head is reported to have criticized the FBI statement alleging that it was baseless. "We are not responsible for the death of Alex Odeh," he said. He added however that "We do not shed any tears for the death of Mr Odeh. He was 100 percent behind the PLO." The JDL was until recently headed by Israeli extremist Rabbi Meir Kahane, who is now a member of the Israeli Knesset.

Arab-Americans have sharply criticized the US media and government for failing to give Odeh's death the type of attention paid to hijack victim Leon Klinghoffer. Former Senator James Abourezk was reported to have blamed the Israeli administration and the American media for "creating an atmosphere in which people who are unbalanced can convince themselves that planting bombs is an act condoned by the authorities." He added that it was time for the US government to take a stand against "inciting rhetoric which encourages acts of violence against Arab people."

In response to the Odeh killing, the ADC was forced to close down all but one office throughout the US. Its offices were often the target of telephone harassment and bomb threats from individuals claiming to be from the JDL.

AL-MASRI AWAITS ISRAELI APPROVAL

Controversy Heats Up Over Nablus Municipality

Nablus

While the Nablus Chamber of Commerce (CC) awaits an Israeli reply to their proposal to run the city's municipality, the CC move is stirring up a lot of controversy locally and abroad.

The CC head, Thafer al-Masri, filed a formal request November 6 with the Israeli authorities and then met November 12 with Israeli Colonel Ephraim Sneh, head of the Israeli 'civil administration' in the West Bank. He has yet to receive a reply, but Sneh promised to study the proposal and answer al-Masri "in the near future".

Meanwhile, al-Masri affirmed his determination to take charge of the Nablus municipality despite severe criticism from Farouk al-Qaddumi, head of the PLO political department. Qaddumi was quoted by the Palestine News Agency *Wafa*, November 11, as saying that the move aims at implementing the autonomy scheme, as suggested recently by Shimon Peres. "Hence they try to appoint new mayors to replace the elected ones," *Al Ittihad* daily quoted Qaddumi as saying.

Qaddumi also pointed to Israeli attempts to reactivate the Village Leagues in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. He said that the PLO warned of the implications of suspicious schemes such as talking about improving the economic conditions in the occupied territories.

Khaldun Abd al-Haq, a member of the elected municipal council, agreed that the Israelis are seeking to implement political solutions through appointing Arabs to municipalities. What is happening cannot be separated from politics, he said, since Peres has plans to appoint mayors to the municipal councils to negotiate a peace settlement in the future with them instead of the PLO. "The CC request did not come from a vacuum," he said.

Al-Masri responded to Qaddumi's remarks, saying that, "We respect Qaddumi's opinion, but the problem of the municipality has no connection with [peace] settlements. We are not a substitute for the PLO."

Al-Masri proposed the transfer of municipality affairs to him and members of the Chamber of Commerce earlier this month. Al-Masri justified his proposal by saying that Nablus businessmen had asked him to take over particularly to save the water and electricity projects. "I am not against elections or the return of the former municipal council, but Jordanian law permits us to run the municipality for one year," he said.

After the CC request was made public, several nationalist institutions issued a statement condemning the move. "From time to time during the past two years, we saw some figures known for their cooperation with Jordan try to take over the municipality by requesting the authorities to transfer its affairs to them. All *their attempts have failed*," the statement read.

Settlers Shoot Nablus Youth

Apparently in response to calls by settler leaders to take the law into their own hands, a group of settlers in Nablus fired several rounds of bullets at demonstrating pupils and seriously injured a 17-year-old.

The incident occurred near the Kadri Tukan High School in the center of Nablus November 11 when armed settlers approached a group of demonstrating pupils and fired in their direction. The pupils fled but the settlers pursued them and shot several times at 17-year-old Salam Abd al-Yusef.

Israeli troops soon arrived at the scene and closed off the area around the school in addition to the entrance to the city for several hours. Abd al-Yusef was rushed to the hospital and was recently reported to have passed out of the critical stage. Israel Radio reported that the pupils had attacked the settler's vehicle with a barrage of stones forcing the settlers to retaliate with gunfire.

The Israeli military authorities later ordered the Kadri Tukan School closed until further notice. Sources in Nablus told *Al Fajr* that when the army arrived they indiscriminately arrested over 40 pupils and city residents who happened to be in the vicinity of the incident. The fate of the settlers who shot at Abd al-Yusef is not known however. Last month, an Israeli court sentenced a Jewish settler to 10 years in prison for his fatal shooting of a 10-year-old Nablus girl in October of 1983.

Meanwhile, a report in *Al Quds* newspaper November 12 suggested that the settlers may be planning a new series of armed patrols in and around Palestinian communities in the occupied territories. This apparently comes after settler leaders charged that Israeli army and police forces have not been able to provide sufficient protection for the settlers against whom local resistance is mounting.

JEC Installs New Generators

The Jerusalem Electricity Company completed November 11 the installation of four new electricity generators in Shu'fat after Israeli authorities withdrew their opposition to the project.

According to *Al Sha'ab* Arabic daily which reported the story, the Israelis agreed to install the new generators on condition that they replace four old ones. The new generators produce 12 megawatts, while the old ones had a capacity of five megawatts only. The new generators will decrease the Arabic company's dependence on Israeli power supplies. The company now buys nearly 90 percent of its electricity from the Regional Israeli Electricity Company.

The Israelis had opposed the installation for the past two years. JEC sources say that the Israeli authorities still refuse to give permission to install a fifth generator which the JEC bought some time ago. The Israeli refusal is on the pretext that the generator violates anti-pollution regulations. The Arab company, which argues that the generator is within the regulations, is pursuing the case in court.

The JEC was founded in 1937. It now serves the entire Jerusalem district as designated by the Jordanian government before 1967, which includes Ramallah, al-Bireh, Bethlehem and Jericho and the towns and villages near them. The company had been under constant threat of seizure by the Israeli authorities. The fate of the company will be in question when its concession rights end in 1987.

Lawyers Oppose Deportations

Four visiting lawyers from Greece, Spain, West Germany and France condemned the Israeli use of the British Emergency Regulations of 1945 to suppress Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The four arrived last week to investigate and report on Israeli plans to deport four Palestinians for their political activities.

In a press conference held at the Israeli Government Press Office in West Jerusalem November 14, the lawyers said that they tried to meet with Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin to urge him to stop the deportations, but were not successful. They said they met with the lawyers' committee defending the four men and their families, and learned that they were not being charged formally. They also learned that the Israelis based their allegations on "secret evidence."

Marie-France Schmidlin, a French lawyer, told reporters that countries which use such laws and carry out deportation without charges are not democratic states. Mikael Michopoulos, a member of the Supreme Court in Greece, said, "I cannot imagine after 18 years of occupation that Israelis use such oppressive laws." Michopoulos tried to attend the Military Objections Committee meeting in which the deportations were discussed, but spent 12 hours waiting in vain. He said that Israel can occupy for a while the land of others, but cannot keep it forever under its control. "I came here to defend the Palestinian people's human rights," he said.

Luis Salvadores, an advocate in Barcelona, Spain, said he had contacts with the Palestinian Workers Unity Bloc and came to attend the hearings when he heard that one of the bloc's leaders, Ali Abu Hilal, is slated for deportation.

European lawyers oppose Israeli intentions to deport four more Palestinians at a press conference at Beit Agron November 14./AO photo.

Five Injured in Anti-Israeli Attacks

Five Israelis were injured last week as a result of frequent attacks on Israeli targets in the occupied territories.

The most serious injuries were sustained by a 20-year-old soldier who was attacked while strolling through Jerusalem's Old City on the evening of November 10. He was stabbed once in the back with a kitchen knife. He was later listed in critical condition at a West Jerusalem hospital. The stabbing occurred only 300 meters away from the site of a similar kitchen knife attack on an Israeli made five days earlier.

Ever since the first attack, Israeli troops have maintained a round-the-clock surveillance of the Old City. City residents complain of harassment and abuse by soldiers who stop passersby and check their identification papers. Youths and Palestinian males who hold Jerusalem IDs were prevented from travelling outside the country. The army also arrested several Jerusalem residents on suspicion of involvement in the Old City attacks. Five youths were arrested in the Old City for possession of switchblades.

A day earlier, an Israeli woman was injured after machine gun fire was directed at an Israeli bus as it travelled toward the Israeli settlement of Emanuel near Nablus. A curfew was soon imposed on the area and a wide search for the attackers conducted. No reports of arrests were available. The injured woman was hospitalized and later released.

Um al-Fahm

INTERIOR MINISTER BOYCOTTS CELEBRATION

Um al-Fahm Declared a City

Despite a boycott by the Israeli interior minister, the Um al-Fahm municipality went ahead with official festivities proclaiming the town's new status as a city. Um al-Fahm now joins Nazareth and Shafa Amr as the third Arab city inside the 'green line'.

The festivities were attended by several hundred local residents and a score of political figures from the Arab and Israeli left. Tawfiq Toubi of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality congratulated the residents on their new status, but warned that "the road towards equality is a long one that does not stop at this change of status." He urged Um al-Fahm to continue fighting for justice and a reasonable share of progress and development, adding that the Israeli interior minister's decision to boycott the festivities was a mere expression of the "discriminatory policies" that the current Israeli government is known for.

Yitzhak Peretz, the Israeli interior minister, cancelled his participation in the festivities scheduled for November 11 after the head of Um al-Fahm's local council refused to apologize for a council pamphlet issued early last month. The pamphlet described the Israeli army occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as "aggressive, violent and debasing". Peretz nevertheless sent a representative from the Interior Ministry with documents officially declaring the town of 24,000 a city. On November 8, the Interior Ministry's director-general requested the Israeli Attorney General's Office investigate whether or not the pamphlet had broken Israeli law.

Um al-Fahm Mayor Hashem Mahamid described the minister's deliberate absence as a "baseless move that was meant to undermine me personally and the newly proclaimed city". He argued that the minister must have seen the pamphlet over a month ago when it was published, but waited until two days before the festivities to declare his boycott. According to Mahamid, the pamphlet was meant to summarize for town residents the situation of their local council and the Arab community inside the 'green line' in general.

"We referred to the occupied territories in a paragraph and merely described the nature of the role of the occupation forces there. And I repeat that the occupation is ugly and the occupiers can only be aggressive, violent and debasing." He said that the call by the Israeli Interior Ministry for an investigation into the pamphlet does not worry him. "It only stated facts," he said.

Um al-Fahm occupied front-page headlines throughout the last two months when its residents took to the streets in protest of Israeli budgetary discrimination against their town. The local council shut down its operations on several occasions and local schools failed to accommodate the town pupils for more than two weeks because of lack of funds. Only then did the Israeli government release IS600 million (US 37,000 dollars) as emergency aid to the town. This amount, according to Mahamid, constitutes less than one-third of the accumulated debt that the council owes to Israeli banks. He was, however, able to pay town employees six months in back wages, but says that they are now back to square one. "We have to plan a new strategy to continue the fight for our legitimate rights," he said. Mahamid said he hopes that now that Um al-Fahm is officially a city, the Israeli government will feel obliged to allocate a larger budget so residents can enjoy "at least the basic services that are currently offered in Israeli towns and cities." The Israeli government has allocated a mere US 100,000 dollars for the town's current fiscal year. This is less than one-fifth the budget allocated to the smallest Israeli city. "Is that the equality they talk about?" he asked.

Italy's PM Confirms Support for PLO

by Maher Abukhater
Al Fajr Diplomatic Correspondent

Italy's Prime Minister Bettino Craxi created an uproar in the Italian parliament and in Israel last week when he defended the PLO's right to armed struggle in their fight to liberate land occupied by Israel.

Seeking a parliamentary vote of confidence for his resurrected coalition government, Craxi reconfirmed in an address before the Italian parliament Italy's policy *vis-a-vis* the Middle East conflict. He said that he recognized the PLO's right to armed struggle although he personally believed it would be counterproductive. He also confirmed Italy's support for PLO participation in any peace talks.

"I oppose the PLO's recourse to armed struggle not because I believe they do not have a right, but because I think the armed struggle cannot bring any solutions" to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Craxi was quoted as telling the parliament.

"An examination of the question shows that armed struggle and terrorism create only innocent victims, but does not resolve the Palestinian problem," he said. "But," Craxi added, "I don't contest the legitimacy of armed struggle."

Craxi, who heads the Italian Socialist Party, submitted his resignation to Italian President Francesco Cossiga October 17 when the Republican Party withdrew from Craxi's coalition government. The Republican pull-out came after Craxi allowed Palestinian guerrilla leader Muhammad Abbas (Abu al-Abbas) to leave Italy for Yugoslavia. Abu al-Abbas was on an Egyptian plane transporting four Palestinian hijackers of the Italian ship the *Achille Lauro*. The plane was intercepted by American jets while flying over the Mediterranean and was forced to land in Italy.

The Italian government, however, was resurrected by the end of October following talks between Craxi and members of his coalition government. In addition to the Socialists, the government is made up of the Christian Democrats, the Republicans, the Social Democrats and the Liberals.

Italian Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini, a conservative member of the Republican Party whose withdrawal brought down the government, agreed to return his three ministers to the coalition after Craxi promised to

Craxi

maintain closer contacts with cabinet members before making important decisions.

Craxi's statement on the PLO angered Israeli officials who hurried to protest the remarks. Italian Charge d'Affairs in Israel, Francesco Bascone, was summoned to the Israeli Foreign Ministry November 8 where he heard Israeli protests against Craxi's pro-PLO statement. Italy later rejected the Israeli protests.

In spite of Craxi's close relations with the United States, he has been an outspoken supporter of Palestinian rights. Craxi issued a strong statement of condemnation against Israel following the air raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunis October 1.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat cabled Craxi congratulating him on his success in reconstituting the Italian government.

Nazareth Hosts Anti-Racism Conference

More than 1000 persons representing various public sectors in the Arab and Jewish communities attended the first Anti-Racism Conference in Israel November 9.

The conference, sponsored by the Committee for the Defense of Land, was convened in the Nazareth Cinema. Conferees urged the Israeli government to recognize the Arab minority in Israel and to grant them equal rights.

Conferees also called on the government to stop practising the 'iron fist' policy in the Israeli-occupied territories. Among the many decisions made at the conference were pledges to demand the Israeli Knesset speed up legislation of the law against racism and to demand the Israeli Interior Ministry cancel its 1982 decision to annex 200,000 dunums of Arab lands to Israeli settlements.

Saliba Khamis, secretary for the CDL, told *Al Fajr* the conference goal was to mobilize the Arab masses to set up joint Arab-Jewish committees for the leadership of the common struggle against racism, incitement and collective punishment. Conferees endorsed a CDL statement which called on Arabs and Jews in Israel to protect their own democratic rights while at the same time recognizing the rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to an independent state.

Delegations representing lawyers, engineers, writers and public institutions attended the five-hour conference. Khamis stressed the fact that the conference was not a "rhetorical speech festival," but that he intended to carry out conference decisions. "The simplest rules of justice and law are not practised in Palestinian society," he said, thus explaining the impetus behind the convening of the conference.

Conferees also called on the Israeli authorities to grant Muslims their right to administer their own affairs and religious properties, through the Muslim *waqf*.

The conference, was also attended by all heads of Arab local councils who demanded they be given sufficient budgets to run their municipal affairs. Participants at the conference also pledged to call for a joint Arab-Jewish demonstration if the Israeli Knesset agreed to discuss Kahane's racist proposals and his demands to deport Arabs out of the country. [The Knesset later refused to discuss Kahane's proposals — ed.]

Rev. Shehadeh Shehadeh, head of the Arab Regional Committee for Arab Local Councils, told conferees that the racist acts and harassment directed against the Arab population have been planned by some of the top Israeli officials. Nazareth Mayor Tawfiq Zayyad spoke on the history of racism in Israel since 1948 and argued that it is not true that Israel has no official racist policy. He said it is also a lie to say that the Druze community, who serve in the military, are given equal rights. "Only by joint Arab and Jewish efforts, can we defeat racism in Israeli society," he said. The Israeli poet Erez Biton spoke about the phenomenon of Kahanism calling it a cancer in the body of the Israeli state. It is not only directed against the Arab population but is also aimed at Israelis themselves, he said. Progressive Israeli writer Mordechai Ben Sha'oul said that the seeds of racism exist in the very soil of Israeli society. Kahane did not demolish houses in the occupied territories, but the Defense Ministry of Yitzhak Rabin did, he said.

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Remember the Refugees

With world media focused on the prominent place Middle East peace occupies in the various regional and superpower summits, little coverage has been given to the crux of the conflict itself – the more than two million Palestinian refugees. No one is talking about their right to return or their right to compensation and a decent life. Instead, Israel is busy even erasing any evidence of the refugee problem.

This week after long discussions with UNRWA, Israeli bulldozers began demolishing unused homes in the Aqbat Jabr and Ain al-Sultan refugee camps near Jericho. The abandoned Nue'imeh camp was destroyed a few weeks earlier.

The official Israeli rationale for this action is the protection of the residents from snakes, disease and other uninvited pestilence. But the real aim of the destruction is much more complex than that. The refugees and their temporary residences have always been a thorn in the flesh for the Israelis. In Lebanon, Israel tried to wipe them out and in the occupied territories many plans have been made to displace them.

Sharon bulldozed wide roads through the Gaza camps in 1970-71. Relocation schemes have been suggested in numerous forms ever since 1967. Of late, former Israeli Minister Ben Porat tried to raise money in the US for such a relocation scheme.

While Israel has agreed to UNRWA's condition that the inhabited houses be left standing, the future doesn't look bright for the remaining refugees. Future attempts to relocate or even push the refugees across the river are almost certain to be made.

And what about the tens of thousands of refugees that lived in these camps between 1948-1967. The destruction of their homes naturally discounts the possibility that they will return to the West Bank, let alone their original homes.

The continuing Israeli ban on returning refugees followed by the destruction of their homes is terribly hypocritical at best when contrasted with Israel's international campaign to bring Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel. Recent reports indicate that Israel is preparing homes for thousands of Soviet Jews.

Despite the fact that Israel tries to wipe out the problem of the refugees and the world ignores their pleas, their rights remain the focal point of the Palestinian national movement. The right of refugees to return has been endorsed by the international community at the UN. Palestinians and our sole representative – the PLO – will continue to seek a just solution for the two million Palestinian refugees. Any Middle East solution that ignores the refugees and their inalienable rights will be short-lived.

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The White Paper

Israel's Propaganda War Against the PLO

by Daoud Kuttab

The statements made by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat during his stay in Cairo were an appropriate reply to Israeli and Western attempts to discredit the PLO. In the Cairo Delaration Arafat made it crystal clear that the PLO abhors violence against innocent civilians. He also vowed to take punitive steps against any Palestinian who violates PLO policy of restricting military attacks to the occupied territories.

This call comes at a time when Israel is trying to capitalize on the hijacking of the Italian cruise ship and the unfortunate killing of an American passenger on board. The Israeli campaign has been twofold. On the one hand, they wish to discredit the PLO's joint political moves with Jordan. On the other hand, they are trying to paint a picture of the PLO as a terrorist organization. The Amman agreement has been a source of agitation and embarrassment to Israel, forcing Israel to give an unambiguous answer to the question of its readiness to trade land for peace.

The latest manifestation of Israel's public relations campaign to discredit the PLO has been the publication of a booklet called *The Threat of PLO Terrorism*. The 36-page booklet put out by the Israeli Foreign Ministry in October 1985 has been dubbed the 'white book' after the British White Paper of 1936 limiting Jewish immigration to Palestine.

In the booklet, the Israeli Foreign Ministry tries to give an update on the PLO's reorganization since 1982, to detail its "terror activities in Europe and in Israel" and to cast doubt on the PLO's role in the peace process.

Despite its glossy cover and neat print the booklet is useless from a factual viewpoint and is erroneously named. It should have been called "Arafat is no peacemaker" or "the real threat of the PLO's political campaign." This can be seen through the booklet as Arafat is singled out as personally responsible for the 'terror' activities. He is also accused of hypocrisy and double-talk.

In order to understand the purpose of this booklet, one has to review Israeli political strategy during the past year. Ever since the signing of the Palestinian-Jordanian agreement on February 11, 1985, the Israeli political machine has been forced into high gear with the aim of inciting Israeli and international public opinion against the PLO.

Realizing that Arafat's agreement with Hussein gave him international credibility, the Israeli campaign took on a more personal twist. It was no longer sufficient to brand all Palestinians as terrorists, or to describe the PLO as a terror group, but it was necessary to paint Yasser Arafat as an arch criminal. They have done so by blaming every military attack committed against Israeli targets on Yasser Arafat. Every time a bomb is tossed, an Israeli bus is stoned or a settler is stabbed the Israelis accuse Arafat of personally ordering the attack. For the Israelis no other member of Fatah or the PLO or even PLO dissidents count. What counts is Arafat, and their aim to destroy Arafat's peaceful initiative with King Hussein.

Thus, the Jordanian-PLO agreement is discussed in detail in the booklet in the second chapter. This chapter, the only one partly documented, attempts to show that the PLO has not moderated its position and is only interested in destroying Israel, not in achieving a lasting peace. The statements of Jordan's foreign minister are pitted against Arafat's confidant Khaled al-Hassan in an attempt to show a discrepancy in viewpoint.

The fact that Jordanian and Palestinian officials have interpreted certain parts of the agreement differently doesn't mean the PLO is not interested in pursuing a peaceful resolution. One could easily point to similar discrepancies between the statements of Israeli Foreign Minister Shamir and Prime Minister Peres. If two members of the same Israeli government are allowed to interpret a political speech differently, why is it so disastrous that Palestinians and Jordanians differ in their political interpretations. In fact, Israelis have historically tried to portray their differences as signs of democracy, while differences among Arab statements are termed contradictions, hypocrisy and double-talk.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry's booklet does not stop with trying to discredit the February 11 agreement, but attempts also to discredit Britain. By claiming that Mayor Muhammad Milhem is a 'terrorist' who planned 'terrorist' operations in Israel, they are castigating Britain for having invited him to London. A closer look at the statements and their source reveals how bizarre these claims are.

According to the publishers, the major source of information is Israeli Brigadier General Amos Gilboa. No sensible reader would accept the research of a high-ranking officer in the Israeli army as unbiased evidence. In addition, some so-called 'facts' are attributed to "captured terrorists". We are not told who they are, what they actually said and, most importantly, the circumstances in which they may have said it. The information on Milhem is so bizarre that no journalist or politician who knows Milhem or the PLO's distribution of work would ever believe that Milhem planned an attack in Jenin or that he is responsible for supplying arms and explosives or that he had a special unit of guerrillas in Wehdat camp at his disposal.

Immediately after this information is given about Milhem, the booklet goes on to report that British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher called him and Bishop Elia Khoury 'men of peace' and that they refused to sign an undertaking to denounce terrorism and to accept UN Resolution 242. A review of the October 28 British House of Commons records shows that Milhem and Khoury had agreed to these two points, and that the excuse used by Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe for not meeting them was that they refused to "explicitly recognize Israel".

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AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

Pacifying Statements Won't Lead to Negotiation

by Sa'eb Erakat

Yaser Arafat, chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, at the close of his recent visit to Egypt, declared his renunciation of any act of violence outside the occupied territories. This move came as a result of pressures placed on the PLO by many Arab states who believe that a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict is in sight.

However, we must realize that a solution to the conflict can only be reached through negotiations involving all concerned parties, and that so-called 'new' statements aimed at pacifying certain parties will not bring us closer to the negotiating table. Some very basic needs must be met before we can negotiate and one of those is Israeli willingness to talk to the legitimate representative of the Palestinians — the PLO. Any statements renouncing violence or anything else designed to pacify other Arab states or even the Americans is not necessarily going to get the ball rolling.

Regardless of Arafat's attempts, these PLO moves have been met with a negative response by Israel and the United States. Arafat's Cairo declaration on the renunciation of violence was answered immediately by a statement of Israeli policy makers that they did not believe him. A similar response came from the US, when a State Department spokesperson stated that the Arafat declaration will not promote the peace process. We have reason to believe that if Arafat were to declare tomorrow his recognition of the state of Israel and his acceptance of UN Resolutions 242 and 338, Israel would answer within one half hour by calling the move a maneuver not to be taken seriously by the international community.

Therefore, all those interested in the peace process should turn from discussions of what to negotiate on and should instead discuss the more basic obstacles in the way of getting to the negotiating table in the first place. The real question that should be addressed is *how to reach* the negotiating table rather than discussing issues to be put on the table once these have begun. The questions include:

1. Is Israel willing to take the Palestinians as partners?
2. Is Palestinian nationalism on the decline?
3. Can Israel incorporate two million Palestinians in its suggested Greater Israel?
4. Can four-and-a-half million Palestinians be annihilated?
5. Can there be a group of Palestinians willing to negotiate outside the umbrella of the PLO?
6. Can there be peace without the PLO?

One "no" answer to any of these questions would be a major obstacle on the way to the negotiating table. By refusing to sit with the PLO, Israel is answering the first question by "no".

As far as the second question is concerned, we believe that the strategic mistake Israel committed in its 1982 invasion of Lebanon was its policy makers' idea about solving the Palestinian question by destroying the PLO, thus not realizing that the PLO was the result of Palestinian nationalism and not vice versa. After the Sabra-Shatila massacres, the continuing attacks on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and the mistreatment of Palestinians all over the world, the Palestinians are more than ever aware that their only salvation lies in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

It is obvious that the answers to the third and fourth questions are outright "no", as for the fifth question, one need but look back at the efforts of Israel to create such bodies outside the PLO. The failure of the Village League should be an object-lesson to those who think of that possibility.

This leads one directly to conclude that there can never be peace without the participation of the PLO.

Yet Israel and the US refuse to recognize this despite all Arafat's peaceful maneuvers. It should be noted that in 1974, the Israeli Knesset passed a unanimous resolution committing the government not to recognize, negotiate with or even talk to the PLO. This resolution came weeks after the Arab countries had adopted the Rabat Arab summit resolutions recognizing the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, which in turn came after the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to the same effect.

In 1974, also, the Kissinger doctrine concerning the PLO was formulated, whereby the US government conditioned any talk with the PLO on its recognition of Israel, the acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and its formal renunciation of violence.

It can therefore be seen that the US and Israel are not about to consider the Palestinians as equal partners in the proposed negotiations. When one talks of negotiations, one is referring to a problem which needs to be solved. It is assumed that the problem is caused by the interaction of different variables. As far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, the West points to Israel, the US, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and even the USSR (with conditions) as the main variables. But where are the Palestinians? They totally ignore the fact that the Palestinian people, the Arab world and the international community have elected the PLO to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. They still talk of various kinds of Palestinians — "moderates", "extremists", "good", "bad", etc. — thus disrespecting the wishes of the Palestinian people.

Just for the sake of argument, if negotiations were to start tomorrow, the Palestinians would be required to make historic concessions involving 80 percent of their land. No Palestinian can do so on his own. So, as Palestinians, if we didn't have a PLO we would have to create one for the purpose of negotiations.

If there is to be peace, Israel and the US should realize that ignoring the PLO does not result in its non-existence; and the Arab world, including the PLO, should realize the urgent need to get their act together. It is not conciliatory or pacifying statements that will bring us closer to the negotiating table. ■

Sa'eb Erakat is a professor of political science and the head of the public relations department at an-Najah University.

Is the PLO Leadership Incompetent?

by Muna Hamzeh

In light of Israel's attack on Yasser Arafat's headquarters in Tunis earlier this month, it is difficult to suggest that the PLO leader should retire. Yet putting Israel's unjustified attack aside for the moment, the time has come for Palestinians to articulate their grievances with the leadership they've held in their esteem for many years.

The only time I met Arafat in person was in 1971 in Amman. With the enthusiasm of a 12-year-old, I waited in front of the PLo headquarters for five hours just to get his autograph. Now 14 years later, I am questioning the legitimacy of his leadership of the Palestinian movement. As a Palestinian nationalist, I feel compelled to explain the reasons why.

Not long after courageously resisting Israel's savage onslaught on Beirut in 1982 — without any help from an impotent Arab world — Arafat faced a worse enemy. Factionalism and mutiny among his fighters resulted in Palestinian fratricide in Tripoli, Lebanon. The formerly overriding goal of unity was shattered. Some factions in the PLO demanded Arafat's resignation, internal reform and a new collective leadership, and insisted on escalating the armed struggle. Instead Arafat has clung to power, desperately trying to retain the support of Palestinian public opinion.

But in an effort to preserve his "regime," Chairman Arafat has had to resort to policies and practices similar to those of some Arab rulers whose tactics he critized so vehemently for many years. These include nepotism, lack of accountability, permissiveness toward corrupt but loyal aides, and authoritarian rule.

Extravagant living has replaced the austere revolutionary lifestyle that befits a true liberation movement. Double-dealing has replaced the resolute honesty which, in former times, distinguished the PLO. While Arafat himself has retained a reputation for personal incorruptibility and accessibility, he has allowed a kind of Palestinian personality cult to develop around him and allowed others loyal to himself, but corrupt to Palestinian ideals, to retain high PLO positions. As a result, personal loyalty to Arafat seems to have become the ultimate test in too many PLO dealings.

Faced with dwindling support and growing pressures from internal, regional and international sources, Arafat has grasped at illusive peace straws, even in the face of antagonistic American and Israeli policies. While his goals may remain sound, his tactics have betrayed a sense of Palestinian desperation and naivete. On February 11, 1985, for instance, he signed a pact with King Hussein of Jordan which has brought further divisions in Palestinian ranks and no meaningful progress toward a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Palestinians were promised that the Amman accord would finally offer a concise and comprehensive framework to achieve a dignified political solution. Instead, Arafat has remained confusing and repetitious, seemingly playing into the hands of his enemies rather than contributing to the realization of the most basic Palestinian aspiration for independence. He has yet to articulate clearly Palestinian awareness that Israel exists and that we as a people represented by the PLO are willing to negotiate a just and lasting political settlement. Had he done so he would not only have deprived his enemies of their lip-service to the cause of peace, but would have also demonstrated the capable leadership we are so desperately lacking.

Clearly, Arafat may have declined to take a less ambiguous position for fear that radical Palestinians may undermine his authority still further. But in the process he has jeopardized Palestinian aspirations by adopting another compromising and ambiguous policy, causing further division and demoralization within Palestinian ranks. Sadly, Arafat has allowed himself to be reduced to a ball being freely tossed between the US, Israel and Jordan — with minimal or negative returns for the Palestinian people. When I heard his satellite address to an Arab American group meeting in Washington in September, I felt frustrated and saddened. Instead of openly and honestly dealing with the difficulties facing the Palestinian movement, Arafat spoke only of "Arab unity" and of the PLO transcending the "bottleneck stage".

Such rhetoric no longer becomes those representing the Palestinian cause. If we are to make peace, we must first face reality — that of our enemy and that of ourselves. We must admit our mistakes and reassess our strategies. We cannot cheer unity and display the victory sign when we are anything but united, when Arab is still killing Arab in Lebanon, when corruption prevails in our institutions and when we continue to have incompetent "bureaucrats" representing us.

I know that in expressing these views I risk being stigmatized as a traitor or supporter of a PLO dissident faction. Yet after years of involvement in Palestinian politics, I cannot hide from my conclusions. If we are not pursuing a democratic independent Palestinian state, and if we cannot practice democracy and tolerance on our way to establish that state, then I'm afraid my understanding of the Palestinian cause has been distorted and erroneous all along.

Crying for Palestine because of Israel's brutal occupation is painful enough, but crying for Palestine because of an incompetent Palestinian leadership remains by far the worst disgrace. ■

Muna Hamzeh, a freelance journalist working in Washington, D.C., was born in Jerusalem and raised in Amman, Jordan. Her father was a member of the PLO during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

This article first appeared in Middle East International *October 25, 1985.*

US Press Bias: Achille Lauro vs. Tunis Raid

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington, D.C. Correspondent

It is a longstanding fact that the press in the United States is a powerful and influential institution. As such, groups with various points of view strive for better coverage and understanding of their views in the US press. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is perhaps the best case in point of the attempts by competing viewpoints to influence the media.

The media coverage of Israel's destruction of the PLO offices in Tunis and that of the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro* are two examples. *Al Fajr* spoke with several Arab Americans whose concern it is to study the basic differences in the way the US media handled the two cases. Just as there is a great difference in the quantity of press coverage, there are still reasons, some said, for that imbalance which partly justify the American media response to the two incidents.

Arab Americans and concerned Arabs in general argue that the American media is full of biases against the Arab cause with regards to the Middle East conflict. Studies previously taken and published support this point of view, especially since the period immediately after the 1967 war. Some Arab observers maintain that the American media is not only biased against them, but is also the cause behind the unfavorable stance of the American public and government toward their cause and the Palestinian issue.

On the Israeli side, the story is almost the same. Israeli officials accuse the American press of an anti-Israel bias. During the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and particularly after the invasion, it was revealed that the Israeli Embassy in Washington had kept a log on a number of newspapers and television networks, grading their coverage of the war as relating to Israel. The result was that many, if not all, of those media institutions observed received a "failing grade" from the Israeli Embassy.

Reporting Bias

During the month of October events in the Middle East once again occupied the American media. On October 1 there was the Israeli bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis intended to kill PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat. Israel argued it was in retaliation for the killing of three Israeli nationals in Larnaca, Cyprus. On the seventh of the month, Palestinians claiming to belong to the Palestine Liberation Front took over an Italian cruise ship, allegedly killing a crippled American and dumping his body into the Mediterranean Sea.

In terms of time and space allotted to the coverage of these two events, the *Achille Lauro* received much more than did the bombing of Tunis. By reviewing the press coverage for the first few days of both crises, it can easily be determined that the *Achille Lauro* received almost double the coverage. Comparing the coverage given the two events in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*, one finds that during the four days immediately following the bombing of Tunis, there were eight front-page articles between the two papers and 20 more articles dealing with the Israeli attack on the PLO offices. In the first four days following the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, there were more than twice the number of front-page articles — 19 — which were much more extensive, and almost twice as many additional articles tackling all aspects of the hijacking — 38. In addition to the obvious difference in the number of articles printed about the two events, there were more front-page photos about the *Achille Lauro* than about the bombing of Tunis.

Needless to say, by the seventh of October, six days after the attack on Tunis, the act was already forgotten, while coverage of the *Achille Lauro* incident continues today and has even intensified. What this unscientific survey tells one is the difference in the quantity of print media coverage of the two events, without touching on the quality of reporting in terms of objectivity or bias.

Bias Expected

Hassan Abdul Rahman, of the PLO information office in Washington, is convinced that even in reporting the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, the American media "didn't provide nearly as balanced a point of view of the Arab and Palestinian side as it did of the American side." However, both Jim Zogby, of the Arab American Institute, and Ron Cathel, formerly of NAAA (National Association of Arab Americans) and now president of Levant Communications, agree that while there is generally a media bias in favor of the Israeli side, the bias in this case is justified.

The "unique coverage" in the case of the hijacking, said Zogby, is warranted due to the placing of foreign nationals — Italians, West Germans, Americans and others — "at risk in a ship on the high seas." The hijacking of the ship, said Ron Cathel, and the tremendous coverage it received is only a result of the unprecedented nature of the operation, versus the more or less common Israeli raids on the PLO. The one uncommon aspect of the bombing, however, was that it was meant to kill the PLO chairman. On the other hand, whenever Americans are held hostage, as in the *Achille Lauro*, "the media gives it all it has... and covers it the way they were expected to do," says Cathel.

Zogby believes that the comparison between the hijacking of the ship and the bombing of the PLO offices in Tunis doesn't really apply to begin with. He said that the two episodes are different and thus warrant a "different type of coverage." Zogby and Cathel also agree that there was sensationalism in both cases, but Zogby maintains that it was of a different nature. The bombing of PLO headquarters in Tunis, he said, was a sensational event because of King Hussein's presence in Washington, and as such, should have received special coverage. Another aspect of the Israeli operation, which should have received coverage in its own right, was that Arafat was "clearly an intended victim" and that the real aim, besides Arafat, was not a particular group, but "was every bit a response to the PLO-Jordanian agreement." He compared this to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon which was a response to PLO diplomatic initiatives at the time. The focus of the press, therefore, was not as clear as it should have been on that incident, Zogby concluded.

"... and how do you feel about the 'murder' of your old school mate."

Zogby, who has been working with the media in a variety of capacities, appears to take for granted a certain amount of bias from the press, due, as he says, to the inability of Arab forces in the US to deal professionally and effectively with the press. In the case of the attack on Tunis, he said, the media outrightly accepted the Israeli line. But, he added, "that, again, is to be expected."

Relative to the Israeli propaganda machine in the US, that of the Arabs is almost nonexistent, both in terms of quality and quantity. The pro-Israel lobby, Zogby maintains, has a greater ability to project propaganda or a certain political line than its Arab equivalent. "No sooner did the bombing [of Tunis] occur, than AIPAC [American Israel Public Affairs Council] did its briefings around town," with press releases instantaneously being made available or delivered to news agencies and other Jewish press agents.

On the other hand, it is often argued that the Arab interest groups in this country are not as well-organized, not as quick and much less focused. Those institutions, said Cathel, "still don't understand the American media, [or] how or why it works the way it does." It has been argued that due largely to the slow decision-making apparatus of Arab organizations, too much important time is lost immediately following a particular event in trying to reach a consensus. Arab organizations, said Zogby, "have to wait until the director can talk to the chairman to get the clear line." When it is important to project a clear viewpoint, Arab organizations hesitate, and thus are ignored by the media which needs a fast and definite statement. Besides this likely explanation of media bias in the US, Cathel blames the Reagan Administration for the way it reads events in the Middle East. In covering the *Achille Lauro* affair, said Cathel, there was "that kind of ethnocentric, xenophobic American attitude that was being portrayed and more than ever seen before on one issue."

Critics of the Arab information machine in the US also claim that unfavorable reporting of the Arab point of view is also a result of an Arab tendency to continuously blast Israel, rather than any serious attempt at showing how ongoing US policy in the Middle East may hurt US interests. Cathel says that as long as the argument presented to the media is reasonable and rational, the media will listen. Criticizing Israel alone, he went on to say, deprives one of the credibility needed with the media, and besides, "it simply doesn't wash."

Along with criticism of Israel, data should be presented revealing how Israel's behavior is affecting the peace process, as well as its effect upon US relations with friendly Arab states.

Liberal-Conservative Split

Middle East observers in the US have always been amazed to find that the historic difference between liberals and conservatives, on most all issues, disappears in mutual hostility regarding the Arab perspective in the Middle East. Jim Zogby believes that this may indeed be changing.

The conservative-liberal split on most issues in the US is one of the most predominant of political phenomena. This applies to domestic as well as to foreign policy issues, except in regards to the Middle East. Liberals, for example, who would vehemently oppose closure of universities, deportation of citizens and censorship of the media everywhere else, justify these same acts when Israel commits them.

However, in the aftermath of the hijacking of TWA flight 847, and most noticeably after the dust had settled after the bombing of Tunis, Zogby said that he observed this historic split becoming a factor now in the Arab-Israeli conflict among political commentators and even some in Congress. "We have never had this before," Zogby said. Even after the emotionally-hyped hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, he said, there emerged a "liberal line which is consistent with the liberal perspective on these issues around the world." A fast look at some work of political commentators would support such an observation. However, to conclude from these rather limited findings that American commentators and some members of Congress have begun to view the Middle East question on the merits of

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Economic Trap in the Territories

No Banks, No Credit and No Communal Growth

by Kate Rouhana

The closed Arab Land Bank next to an East Jerusalem branch of Israel's Bank Leumi.

Ali, a 27-year-old Palestinian from the Ramallah area, has lived with his parents since he was married in 1982. Ali and his wife decided that they didn't want to rent a flat; they wanted to build right away.

There the nightmare began. "I asked about taking a loan from an Israeli bank," said Ali, "but they would have required the house I was going to build as collateral and charged me 30 percent interest. If I couldn't pay the loan back, I would have lost the house."

Ali first went to family, then close friends, to borrow. One hundred dinars here, 50 dinars there. He offered to pay interest, "but of course they wouldn't take it." One of his creditors came into a severe financial crisis himself, "so I had to scramble to borrow from other friends to pay the friend in trouble."

Ali's story exemplifies the problems Palestinians face living in a society without credit.

There is an old capitalist truism that says, 'You need money to make money.' By the same token, societies need credit, capital and incentive schemes to maintain and grow within a healthy economy. Most countries in the world have a network of banks that provide the double service of holding the public's cash and lending to the industrial and agricultural sectors to stimulate development and economic growth.

The occupied West Bank and Gaza is probably one of the few places in the world where such credit facilities simply do not exist. There are banks, to be sure, but there is no significant credit to speak of. The Palestinians in the territories, without a government to direct a central bank, are squeezed between Israel's economic plans for the territories and Jordan's attempts to block them. They are also caught in the unenviable predicament of being linked to the highly complex and unstable Israeli economy without any of the support the government makes available to the Jewish population to cushion the disastrous impact of hyperinflation.

"From 1967-1978 there was no source of credit for Palestinians in the occupied territories — whether they wanted to start a business, build a home, cultivate their land, or carry out a municipal project," said Palestinian economist Ibrahim Mattar. "We are a society without credit."

The consequences of this on the territories' economy have been clear and devastating. "The fact that we have no commercial banks of our own prevents the creation of money. The Israelis use all our deposits for their own economy. We can't develop a commercial sector," said Mattar. "Secondly, development of the commodity-producing sectors has been stunted, which is the important point. As a result, we have become more and more dependent on Israeli products. If there is no industry, there is no employment, so people flock to Israel to work as laborers. It's a chain reaction."

Najah agro-economist Hisham Awartani seconded this assessment. "Not having enough credit means that our farmers continue to use outdated techniques which make them all the more vulnerable. They resort to buying second or third-hand Israeli machinery. It's very rare to see decent equipment, because of the scarcity of credit," he said.

The lack of a formal credit system has also driven Palestinians to look for unofficial sources of cash — friends, family, American private voluntary organizations (PVOs) and even money changers. A random sample of 276 businesses taken in 1982 revealed that only three percent had sought loans from banks; the rest were financed privately.

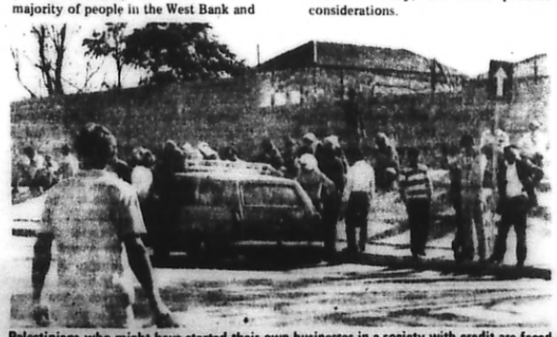
Yet such an informal system cannot substitute for real long-term, low-interest, specially designed bank and government loans. Money changers, for example, only lend to their best customers and friends on a short-term basis, i.e. for a week or so. And the majority of Palestinian farmers and would-be businessmen are not lucky enough to have money in the family. "A lot of people we deal with have never had a bank account," said one PVO official. "They can't read or write. They have no credit history and no fancy names to recommend them. All they need is JD1000 (US 2500 dollars). And these are the majority of people in the West Bank and Gaza. Where are they going to get the money?"

The West Bank and Gaza was not always a society without credit. Before Israel took over the area in 1967, a plethora of banks had branches in the territories. In the West Bank, for example, there were 24 branches with such names as the Agricultural Credit Cooperative, the Industrial Development Fund, the Arab Land Bank, the Municipality and Local Council Loaning Fund, and the Jordanian Cooperative Union, in addition to regular commercial banks. The total credit available to West Bankers was about one-quarter of the total for Jordan.

When Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, it closed down all existing banks and placed their assets into Israeli vaults. Except for one, the banks never re-opened because Israel insisted that its central bank would hold their assets and supervise their activities, an arrangement which Jordan vehemently refused. The exception was the Bank of Palestine in Gaza, which was given permission to re-open in 1981 under almost inoperable conditions (see box).

Israeli Banks Out of Reach

In place of the Arab banks, in line with a decision taken in July of 1967, branches of Israeli banks were opened in the occupied territories. Today there are 28 Israeli branches in the West Bank alone. But according to Meron Benvenisti, an Israeli researcher who heads the West Bank and Gaza Data Base, "Palestinians make only infrequent use of Israeli banks." The reasons vary: mistrust, high inflation, reluctance to place one's cash at the disposal of the Israeli economy, and other political considerations.



Palestinians who might have started their own businesses in a society with credit are faced to hire on as unskilled laborers in Israel instead.

Very few Palestinians approach Israeli banks for loans. This is partly because of the sky-high interest rates (which in recent years, due to inflation, reached as high as 300 percent annually; today they are around 30 percent) and partly because of the controversial collateral usually required by Israeli banks — land and/or home. Few Palestinians are willing to risk losing their land because they can't repay a loan.

Residents of the West Bank and Gaza (as opposed to East Jerusalem) face an additional obstacle, says Mattar. "Commercial banks are not allowed to give credit to merchants for large amounts without a permit from the Israeli military government," he explained. "Most merchants don't want to request such a permit." Jerusalem residents do not need a permit from the military government, but they do need approval from the Israeli Ministry of Trade and Industry to initiate business ventures, according to Fa'eq Barakat, head of Jerusalem's Chamber of Commerce. And that approval, Barakat says, is very rare indeed.

The only other kind of credit Israeli banks offer is the overdraft — a very short-term option for customers with "known" names. All this means is that reliable customers are allowed to overdraw on their checking accounts, provided they pay daily interest. But this type of credit is essentially worthless because it is so short-term, and the amount is too small to be useful. Besides, the average Palestinian in the occupied territories has never even had a bank account, let alone in an Israeli bank.

No Government Incentive Schemes

Aside from commercial banks, another major source of capital in healthy economies is the government, but here too, Palestinians in the occupied territories are squeezed. The Israeli government, which is so extensively involved in Jewish enterprises on both sides of the 'green line,' has little interest in giving Palestinian agriculture or industry a boost. According to Awartani, "The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture gave out commercial loans to [Palestinian] farmers for three years until 1974, when the whole project came to an end. The official attitude towards agriculture took a sharp turn in 1973-1974, when the Israelis decided that developing agriculture in the West Bank and Gaza was not in their interest."

Another Palestinian economist, who preferred to remain unidentified, said that there used to be several government schemes for businesses which "were in principle available to Arab producers, although I don't know if anyone took them."

"The banks will not touch a new industrial venture," the economist said. "There certainly are not sufficient sources of credit for new industries. The banks do not accept machinery as collateral, and people rarely have the kind of cash or land the bank requires." And of course, there are no government subsidies for Palestinians.

According to Benvenisti, the government's share in the credit available to the Palestinian public in the territories has declined drastically since 1976 and so, as a result, has the amount of credit. In 1976, total credit available to the public in the West Bank, for example, was 22 percent of total assets. Government credit was 43 percent of that total. By 1982, credit had dropped to only 10.5 percent of total assets, and the government's share was a mere 4.3 percent.

The lack of credit for Palestinian entrepreneurs, says Benvenisti, fits into Israel's long-term plans for the economy of the territories, which changed drastically after 1973. Before then, the prevalent assumption was that integrating and holding on to the territories would create more of an economic burden than a benefit. However, following the October war, two changes in perception occurred: the Israelis realized that there was not going to be a quick and easy solution to the political stalemate, and they also realized that the territories provided many economic benefits at hardly any cost.

The strategy, according to Benvenisti, haphazardly evolved into one of encouraging individual prosperity but discouraging communal economic growth which might cause competition with Israeli products and provide an economic basis for a future state. In *The West Bank Data Project*, Benvenisti wrote:

> "Individual prosperity is based mainly on the purchasing power of laborers in Israel, which amounts to one-third the total resources of the territories. Communal stagnation is caused by discriminatory terms of trade; lack of protection, credit, infrastructure, or subsidization; and administrative restrictions. That disparity explains how the Israelis can depict the occupation as benign and beneficial, quoting statistics on the increase in GNP and the consumption of durables, while Palestinians can condemn it as exploitative, quoting statistics on terms of trade, differential subsidization, lack of credit, and usurpation of resources." (p.11)

Jordan: Another Dead End

Given Israeli restrictions and obvious disinterest in financing Palestinian development, it would seem that Jordan would have stepped in to fill the gap. Surprisingly, however, it hasn't worked that way.

According to Mattar, the Jordanian Higher Committee for the occupied territories decided not to grant any loans to West Bankers after 1967 and froze all repayment on loans taken before 1967. "Even the big businessmen can't get loans from Amman for projects in the West Bank," said Phil Davies, head of the Community Development Fund. "Amman banks do not extend credit for West Bank projects." Only people who had holdings in Jordan they could put up as collateral had any chance of getting loans, and these were only the very few and the very rich whose names were sufficient to guarantee them a loan. For most, the gateway to Jordanian credit stayed tightly shut until 1978.

In 1978, the Jordanian-Palestinian Joint Committee for Steadfastness Funds was established at the Arab summit in Baghdad. Various Arab countries agreed to contribute annual sums for Palestinian development in the occupied territories. The Fund, as it was dubbed, was set up in Amman and began disbursing loans directly and through Jordanian banks in 1978. "Things changed with the formation of the Joint Committee. Credit began to be available through the committee and specialized banks in Amman. The Industrial Development Bank and the Agricultural Credit Cooperative started giving loans. The years 1979-1982 were a bonanza. Many industries got funds and housing projects started going up everywhere," said Mattar. Loans obtained through the committee had only a 2-3 percent interest rate.

Ragheb Murtega, head of the Gaza Chamber of Commerce, recalled that one year the Joint Committee gave every Gaza citrus farmer who owned over 10 dunums several hundred Jordanian dinars to buy fertilizer and fuel. "But the money only went to 80 percent of the farmers and only once," he said. Fa'eq Barakat, head of the Jerusalem Chamber of Commerce, also praised the committee. "If projects have expanded here, it's only through the joint fund in Amman," he said.

The Joint Committee, while greatly appreciated, was also the target of much criticism. Several Palestinians told *Al Fajr* that its contributions were counterproductive. "The joint fund helped in destroying and jeopardizing the whole situation. Some people got money and others didn't; they purchased goods that were non-productive, without planning or insuring that the money would be recycled or invested in a productive way or at least to create jobs. Most of the projects that got the loans are bankrupt now," one economist said.

The joint fund went the way of many other pan-Arab projects: it died a quiet death as the Iran-Iraq war and other issues intensified division in the Arab world.

PVOs: Help in Small Doses

Even before the Joint Committee was set up, the American private voluntary organizations (PVOs) in the West Bank and Gaza surmised the gravity of the credit situation and tried to take the initiative. These include offices like *Catholic Relief Services* (CRS), the *Mennonite Central Committee* (MCC), *American Near East Refugee Aid* (ANERA), *Community Development Foundation* (CDF), and AMIDEAST, for example.

The PVOs began to initiate self-help projects in 1976, primarily, according to Awartani, on a grant basis. The amounts, however, were very small — from JD200-500 (US 500-1250 dollars) — and their overall contribution was not enough to have a widespread impact. Nevertheless, the PVOs soon attracted Israeli displeasure by their funding activities and, in the spring of 1979, the military government passed a number of regulations that "described a process of applications and approval, requiring involvement by the Israeli government at every stage of every project," according to an article in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Winter 1985, p. 146).

Yet despite this the PVOs continued their grant giving, with mixed results, according to Awartani. "To an extent, the PVOs led people to expect and depend on handouts. But on the positive side, the PVOs demonstrated clearly that money is needed and can be put to good use if it's made available on a more formal basis — as loans, to be repaid, given to all those who qualify, not only those who happen to know X or Y. And indeed, the PVOs are trying to change their policies," he said.

The direction the PVOs seem to be going in is setting up regular credit institutions that could take the place of banks. "CDF," says director Davies, "is actively exploring ways to address the credit needs of small-scale agriculturalists. In addition to addressing a frequently expressed need, it's also a healthier approach to progress, because it's really self-help, more so than the grant system." He declined to elaborate further.

Indeed, several credit projects are presently percolating, but none is at an advanced enough stage for the initiators to feel free to discuss it. "We have to agree that the time for credit has arrived," Awartani said.

Lessons for the Future

Whatever the final form these credit institutions finally assume, they have several not-so-successful predecessors to learn from. And Palestinian economists readily point out the errors of the past.

One economist thinks that while credit is important, it is not the territories' most pressing need. Skilled labor and management talents are in far shorter supply, he thinks. "The idea of trying to set up a lending organization here is a good thing. The danger is that by neglecting the other side — the importance of developing entrepreneurship, organization, and planning — they'll make loans on the same basis they did in the past and will marginally, if at all, affect the state of economic and social welfare of the Palestinian community under occupation. It won't do anyone any good to set up more one or two-person enterprises competing with existing ones and producing the same things when we have a huge surplus of capacity and tremendous idleness. We should lend only to enterprises that diversify and supply new needs, not to ones that will be redundant."

Najah's Awartani cited four criteria to keep in mind for any new credit enterprise: To give credit instead of hand-outs; to base the facilities inside the occupied territories, not outside; to devise non-commercial terms of credit that suit local conditions; and to devise terms of repayment with a flexible grace period. "Farmers and businessmen in the occupied territories simply can't borrow at commercial rates of interest," he said. "We have to realize that in Israel and Jordan, loans are given at concessional rates. Then too, an agricultural project — unlike an industrial project — takes time to come to fruition. If a farmer can't repay at the end of a year, it shouldn't be the end of the world."

Awartani proposes a system of "supervised credit" akin to programs in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s. "Close supervision is a far more practical guarantee than formal collateral. Land is a phony security; people here won't sell their land to repay a loan."

Zuhair al-Rayyes, a Gaza lawyer, thinks that economic conditions in the occupied territories simply render banks an impossible dream. There are so many obstacles, he explained: obtaining a permit from the military government, meeting Israeli government criteria, and dealing with the ever-devaluating shekel. Al-Rayyes proposes instead a novel but ancient solution: a financial company that would operate like an Islamic bank. That is to say, no interest and no customers, only partners. "The company becomes just a coordinator between the man who has the capital and the man who has the business," according to al-Rayyes. "If I lend money to X to start a business, then X has to share his profits with me. This would not be a bank at all, so one would not have to meet the conditions according to which Israeli and European banks work. That would solve both the legal problem and the administrative obstacles and avoid involvement with the unhealthy Israeli economy."

Whatever emerges, it better happen soon. "No one helps us, and our economy is tired, tired, tired," the head of Gaza's Chamber of Commerce, Murtega, said. "We need subsidies so we can live in Gaza and remain near our citrus trees."

Lone Bank of Palestine

There is one Arab bank in the entire West Bank and Gaza Strip. This is the Bank of Palestine, which celebrated its 25th anniversary this year. It has only been operative for 11 of those 25 years, however, as all three branches (Gaza City, Rafah and Khan Yunis) were closed in 1967. But the shareholders of the Bank of Palestine — which was a local bank, unlike institutions that were subject to Jordanian control as well — decided to try to get the bank reopened.

The fight took nine years, from 1972-1981, and endless rounds of negotiations with the Israelis. Finally all was settled — except the Bank's name. The Israelis refused to let it reopen with its old name, Bank of Palestine. But the Israeli Supreme Court ruled otherwise, and the Bank of Palestine reopened on August 6, 1981, with 1050 shareholders and a total capital of 500,000 Egyptian pounds.

On the first day, the Israelis informed manager Hashem Ata Shawwa that the Bank of Palestine would not be allowed to deal in foreign currency. "At that time, the Israeli shekel was collapsing much more than today. Their idea was to cripple the bank so it couldn't improve. People aren't crazy enough to deposit Israeli money and have it collapse the next day," said Shawwa.

The Bank was also barred from reopening its other Gaza branches in Khan Yunis (although the city of 100,000 has no other bank now that the Israeli *Leumi* has closed up shop) and Rafah, or opening new branches in the West Bank.

But somehow the bank managed to turn a profit and grow. At the end of 1984, it had 3500 depositors and aggregate assets of 4,805,686 Egyptian pounds, and dividends to shareholders were up over 1983.

More importantly, the Bank of Palestine has been able to extend loans to the needy Gaza population. The average loan the bank gives is around US 15-20,000 dollars, but it does sometimes give out loans for US 100,000 or 120,000 dollars.

A critical advantage of borrowing from the Bank of Palestine is that it does not require real estate for collateral except for loans over US 100,000 dollars. "As an Arab bank, we can't require land for collateral. We consider personal issues," said Khamis Asfour, the bank's legal advisor. "If a person's name is good, he can just sign and take the loan."

The Bank of Palestine extended 200 such loans in 1985 at the relatively low interest rate of about 12 percent. Particular emphasis was placed on citrus farmers. "The Bank of Palestine," said manager Shawwa, "is taking the place of all other banks — industrial, commercial, etc. — so we try to cover all those needs. We depend only on the people of the Gaza Strip; we do not obtain any other help. Everyone involved in the bank — owners, shareholders, employees — all are Palestinians from the Strip."

Peace Now in Review

Shalom Achshav – Ledyokona Shel Tnua (Peace Now – Portrait of a Movement), *by Mordechai Bar-On Kibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House Ltd., Tel Aviv, 1985*

by Michael Lowry

In the autumn of 1977 a few months into his first term as prime minister, Likud leader Menachem Begin was propelled into the international limelight as co-star with Anwar Sadat in Jimmy Carter's Middle East peace program. The television cameras were rolling and Walter Cronkite was on the line from New York addressing Begin as "Mr. Prime Minister." No longer the terrorist chieftain the right-wing fanatic, the hero of Deir Yassin, Begin took a step forward and blustered "No more war, no more bloodshed!"

But then he began to have second thoughts.

A group of 348 reserve army officers drafted a letter to Begin expressing their trepidation about a government that "prefers settlements on the other side of the 'green line' to the resolution of the historic conflict and the establishment of a normal system of relations in our region." The letter met with an enthusiastic response – from the public that is, not from Begin – and much to the Likud's chagrin, within weeks an extra-parliamentary protest movement was formed – Peace Now (hereafter PN).

The Labor Party's electoral defeat in 1977 had ended its half century-long hegemony over the Zionist movement and state. Begin's ascendance breached a fissure in the Zionist monolith. The era of consensus politics was over.

In September 1978, while the terms of an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty were being "thrashed out" in Camp David, PN demonstrated in Tel Aviv 100 000 strong. Instant peace (made in the USA) was on the horizon and, for the supporters of PN, it was an opportunity Israel couldn't afford to miss (although the Labor Party had passed up similar opportunities, like the 1971 Rogers' Plan in the past).

After a lot of arm-twisting, the framing of deliberately vague formulations regarding Palestinian "autonomy" and various shady deals, a draft of an Israeli-Egyptian peace accord was worked out and Begin returned to Israel. PN members were on hand at Lydda airport to greet Begin and present him with flowers.

But the flowers quickly wilted. In the years between the Camp David meetings and the outbreak of the Lebanon war, PN was driven to the realization that Begin's Likud government was an obstacle to peace. This was a rather minor analytical feat, yet one which sufficed to establish PN as the ideological rallying point for opponents of the nascent fascist movement forming in Begin's shadow. PN thus found itself waging a twofold campaign: on one hand, it spearheaded opposition to government policy and on the other hand, it served as a dike to keep the rising floodwaters of liberal discontent from spilling over into opposition to the Zionist establishment.

Mordechai Bar-On, former Israeli army chief education officer and Jewish Agency official, who is at present a lacklustre Citizens' Rights Movement member of Knesset, has been associated with PN since its inception. His "non-official" history of the movement consists of two sections: the first is a two-dimensional account of PN between 1978-1984; the second is unrestrained praise of the movement, which Bar-On refers to as a "portrait". This being the first book on PN to be published, it's quite likely that it will be translated into English in the near future, promoted as a "pioneering study," and showered with compliments by all "right-thinking" people.

If Bar-On possesses any critical faculties, they were in abeyance when he wrote this book. He is unashamedly ecstatic about PN. As to what enthuses him, it is first and foremost that PN has stuck to the straight and narrow of what Bar-On refers to as "the rules of the game" or "the democratic norms of good citizenship". The idea that these "rules" are determined and defined by institutional inequality is one of the matters liberal apologists tend to overlook. Bar-On is no exception in this regard; nor, he claims, is PN.

Over 50,000 demonstrated in a Peace Now protest in Tel Aviv in July 1984.

PN was not formed by the alienated marginals of industrial civilization, writes Bar-On in the opening chapter of his book, but by "a large group of people who fought in the wars of Israel out of deep identification with the security and existential needs of the state." On page 84, he elaborates: "The PN movement sees itself as an integral element of Israeli existence, of the Zionist movement, and even of the Establishment... To a certain extent, one can say that PN members are not anti-Establishment insofar as they see themselves as the 'right kind of Establishment'. The members of the movement take it as axiomatic that their political thinking can serve to safeguard the existence of the state and the existence of the 'situation' that Zionism has created in its 100 years of development. Not only does PN believe in the principle of a Jewish state, it also believes in the manner in which the state was set up, i.e. the democratic process and the attendant rules of the game."

Welcome to the realm of the "Happy Consciousness," to an Israel stripped of contradictions where the good of the state is uncritically identified with the good of the public – or more correctly, with the good of the Jewish public. Forget that a few kilometers away from the Knesset (where democracy is indeed treated as a game), on the other side of the invisible 'green line' that demarcates the limits of Israeli democracy, a very different set of "rules" are in force – by dint of the coercive power of the Israeli army. And don't get any nasty little thoughts about the role the United States is playing in the Middle East. That's not respectable!

And for Bar-On, respectability is all important. He couches his own Zionist rectitude in a form of polite democratic banter, the gentlemanly give-and-take of the liberal Zionist establishment's Friday night "bitching sessions" – which Bar-On argues were galvanized into action by PN. He even compares the process to that undergone by the Parisian debating salons that predated the French Revolution, albeit with the condition that Israel is not on the verge of cataclysmic revolution.

Yet regardless of his foibles, Bar-On is an authentic PN mouthpiece. While members of the movement may take issue with his interpretations and conclusions, his book is undoubtedly the product of PN thinking. Hence, Bar-On's treatment of PN's response to the Israeli army invasion of Lebanon is particularly revealing.

By the summer of 1982, Carter had been replaced by Reagan, the Shah of Iran had fled his peacock throne, and Anwar Sadat had been assassinated while reviewing Egypt's military might. Begin, however, had weathered the storm. Following the granting of autonomy to the Israeli settlers in the occupied territories and the withdrawal from Sinai, Begin joined hands with Sharon. Together they stood at Israel's northern border, casting their gaze to the Litani River, the Awali River, the Beirut-Damascus highway, and places beyond.

"One fell stroke," chortled Sharon.

"We'll call it 'Operation Peace for the Galilee,'" exclaimed Israel's Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

"You boys just get operational now and pacify the north," said US Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

Everyone in Israel knew what was brewing. Bar-On writes: "Before the outbreak of the war it was clear that about half the population... opposed the adventure. It had been an open secret for months that Minister Sharon was pushing the government into war and that all he was waiting for was a suitable pretext in order to implement his overblown plans for a 'new order' in Lebanon by means of Israeli army cannons. Together with various parties and individuals, PN warned the government of implementing the plan." (p. 104)

But when the war did break out, on June 6, PN was conspicuously absent from the ranks of the anti-war movement. On July 14, an announcement appeared in the press that PN was suspending its activities until fighting had ceased. The announcement was later retracted, but not before PN had been called "War Now" by the Israeli left.

Bar-On explains PN's lack of response as follows: "Most of the members of the movement continued to hold to the idea that the war was unnecessary from the start, unjustified and inefficacious... But they were all affected by the same *strong psychological and emotional forces* [italics added] that made them wait and avoid organizing any protest activities for the time being." (p. 54)

As PN joined the Labor Party in capitulating to the patriotic demands of the hour, the Commitee Against the War in Lebanon, a group moved by different psychological, emotional and *political* forces took to the streets to demonstrate against the Israeli assault on the Palestinian population of Lebanon.

"The Committee was formed primarily by groups to the left of the PN movement," writes Bar-On, "but in those indecisive days, many supporters of PN joined their voices to the [Committee's] demand to immediately halt the war, although the majority did not accept the extremist demand for the immediate withdrawal of Israeli army forces from Lebanon." (p. 56)

How Bar-On knows that the PN defectors – who by the third week of the war numbered in the thousands – did not accept the Committee's "extremist" demand for unilateral withdrawal can be garnered by his account of the reasons behind PN's re-emergence: "In spite of the movement's strong feeling that the war was unnecessary and unjustified, its members – who are well acquainted with public life and are familiar with the basic defense considerations of the state at firsthand – could not ignore the partial achievements the war could secure..." (p. 56)

On June 26, 1982, PN organized a demonstration calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities but stopping short of the demand for unilateral withdrawal. Approximately 100,000 people attended the rally. Bar-On comments: "Under crossfire from the right and the left, the leaders of PN could conclude that their move was successful, attesting to their movement not being a regular protest movement that uncritically expresses the feelings of its supporters, but one which carefully weighs its considerations out of public and national responsibility and fidelity to a constantly changing situation... The call of Yes Gvul [There is a Limit – an anti-war group associated with the committee that called on soldiers to refuse to serve in Lebanon – ed.] negated the principles of PN, which has always staunchly upheld the principle of keeping to the rules of the democratic game." (p. 57)

But the rules of the game were breaking down. PN was denounced by the government as a "fifth column," a movement of "traitors" who were "stabbing the nation in the back." And PN supporters were becoming radicalized in spite of their leaders' intentions.

It was the Sabra and Shatila massacres that stripped the government of whatever legitimacy it had managed to retain in the eyes of the PN constituency. The curtain dropped and the public beheld the Emperor and his court totally naked, wallowing in a river of blood. At that point, the Labor Party stepped in to stage-manage the groundswell of public dissatisfaction with the war. A mammoth demonstration with an estimated attendance of 400,000 people was held

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Palestinian Sulha: The Traditional Way of Reconciliation

by Said al-Ghazali

The Incident

People were anxiously awaiting in an atmosphere of tension the traditional verdict on reconciliation that would put a final end to the year-old feud between the al-Ghazali and Sirhan families in Jerusalem which had erupted over the murder of Walid al-Ghazali by Samir Sirhan. On the scheduled day of reconciliation, hundreds of people, members of the respective families, and prominent figures from Jerusalem, Hebron, Bethlehem and the village of Sawahreh arrived at the al-Ghazali *Diwan* (communal assembly hall) in Azzariya, lending the gathering a very official air. Members of the *Jaha* (the mediating team) also arrived and presented the terms of reconciliation.

After a long debate, the Hebronite Judge Zuhair Maraqa insisted on Islamic compensation for the injured family of 4444 grams of gold, equal to JD18,000 (US 45,000 dollars). In doing so, he cancelled the bargaining and refused to negotiate further. In similar cases, people usually demand a much larger sum of money with the intent of bargaining. Then the *Jaha* members attempt to reduce this sum, by saying: "For the sake of God, bring it down further. For the sake of the prophet, even further. For the sake of the members of *Jaha*, and so forth." When an amount is agreed upon, the man chosen to be the guarantor or *Kafal* for the offending family then stands and agrees to the payment. It is also said that he *Labas Thoub* or wears the tribal dress of authority for the offender's family.

The al-Ghazali family, whose son Walid was killed by Samir Sirhan on October 29, 1984, then insisted that the *Sulha* (or reconciliation) did not include Samir, the killer. In other words, the families agreed not to revenge the death by taking the life of any other person from the families, except Samir.

After the agreement, the father and brothers of Samir came to the *Diwan* with 25 goats, some bags of rice and oil tins. However, the al-Ghazali family refused to accept them, saying that they do not want to levy a heavy burden on the Sirhan family.

Some members of the al-Ghazali family shook hands with Said Sirhan, Samir's father, who carried a white flag as a symbol of peace between the two families. On the next day, advertisements of gratitude and the documents of the agreement were published in local newspapers.

The murder itself was an insane act. It followed a heated debate between Samir's brother and Walid's cousin. Samir swore then to kill any member of the al-Ghazali family.

When he saw Walid's van parked in Salah ed-Din Street in Jerusalem a few days later, Samir, a shopkeeper on Salah ed-Din Street, took his knife and ran toward Walid's vehicle where Walid waited for his wife and his children to visit a clinic in the area. Samir, after a short fight, drew his knife and stabbed him. Walid died on his way to the hospital.

That evening, the process of traditional reconciliation began when hundreds of prominent figures from Jerusalem, Hebron, and Bethlehem, who had been summoned by the families, came to the house of Walid's father to formulate *Atwa* or a truce for three and one-third days. Acceptance of the *Atwa* means that there will be no further clashes during this period. If the family of the victim refuses the *Atwa*, members of the *Jaha* will refuse to drink coffee, which is a ceremonial action meaning agreement has been reached. They keep arguing until they get the *Atwa*. In rare cases, families refuse to give *Atwa* which means that there will be more acts of violence.

After the end of the initial *Atwa*, the same *Jaha* returned to the al-Ghazali *Diwan* to take another *Atwa* for three months. The details of the incident were then publicly reported and the *Jaha* members focused their discussions on the importance of the reconciliation between people. They supported their statements by references to the *Quran* and some of the prophet's sayings. A member of the *Jaha* brought with him a book written by the famous Islamic philosopher Abu Hamed al-Ghazali to encourage the family to go on with the process of reconciliation.

Walid was eulogized as a good person who feared God. The *Atwa* was then prolonged to three months and Samir's family paid the *Fersah Atwa* (the first payment). After this first *Atwa's* termination, the second and third *Atwa* were taken for a period of up to nine months. During the first three months, the Sirhan family was forced to leave Jerusalem and prevented access to certain roads.

The Law

The process of *Sulha*, or reconciliation is a daily occurrence in the southern areas of Palestine, particularly around the Hebron area. This system is based on the tribal codes which have been verbally inherited from generation to generation since the pre-Islamic period 1400 years ago. A modified system is still used to end all kinds of disputes and conflicts in the society. There are many imporant aspects:

Atwa

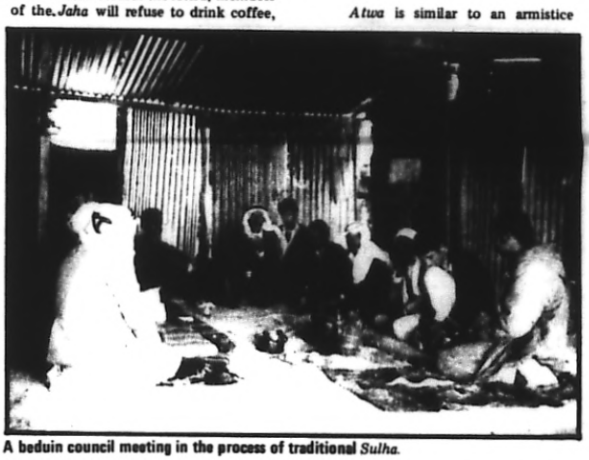
Atwa is similar to an armistice between enemies. It is usually guaranteed by other strong families. Its conditions and the period in effect differ from one incident to another. In cases of murder and adultery, the immediate *Atwa* is three and one-third days and in case of serious injury the *Atwa* could be one week, two weeks or even a month. The *Atwa* is shorter for more serious crimes because the situation needs to be dealt with promptly and cannot afford a longer cooling off period.

The violation of *Atwa* is a grave offense against the *Kafal* or the guarantor. Those who commit the offense are obliged to take the immediate *Atwa* from the *Kafal*.

The well-known tribal judge in Sawahreh, Khader Abu Sabha, now 74, explains it this way, "to violate *Atwa* or *to blacken the white faces* is an unforgivable offense." Abu Sabha who has been a tribal judge since 1936 and has issued famous verdicts on land cases involving forgery, recalled an incident in which a resident of Salt in Jordan whose father was killed by somebody in Wadi Jir killed the murderer after eight years had passed since the reconciliation. The *Kafal* then forced his family to pay JD20,000 (US 50,000 dollars) and to return the compensation they had taken before. Abu Sabha said that the reconciliation is to be effective forever.

Mustafa Abd al-Fattah Abu Fannar from Yatta, is also a tribal judge. He ruled on a similar case last month. A member of the Azazmeh clan in Beer Sheba asked the *Kafal*, Said Abu Sabileh, to pay him US 50,000 dollars he had guaranteed for another person in a previous dispute. Abu Sabileh refused claiming that he had not guaranteed. In response, Azazmeh told Beer Sheba tribes that Abu Sabileh did not keep his word. Abu Sabileh and his clan feared they would lose their position among the tribes and then charged that Azazmeh had defamed them. The two parties agreed to present their case to three judges. Abu Fannar was one of them.

After listening to their claims, and to witnesses, Abu Fannar issued his verdict that Abu Sabileh must pay US 150,000 dollars for not keeping his promise and that Azazmeh must pay JD3000 (US 7500 dollars) if he tries to defame Abu Sabileh again.



A beduin council meeting in the process of traditional *Sulha*.

Atwa of Admission

In admission *Atwa*, one of the opponents admits that he committed the offense and says that he is ready to bring *Jaha* and to pay. If he denies that he committed the crime, however, and the victims insist on his guilt, then the victims will be asked to bring evidence to prove their claims. If they are unable to do so, a judge then asks the accused to swear by God or the *Quran* that he is innocent. Five people of his family who are known to be honest must also swear that their relative is sincere. If the judge suspects that the person who swore is a liar, he rules that he swore and that he must pay an amount of money called *Taiha Tala* as a guarantor of his oath.

Atwa of Inquiry

In case of both opponents denying responsibility for the offense, a judge must then decide to have an *Atwa* of inquiry to investigate what happened and to study the evidence. If the judge is able to prove that one opponent is the offender, then the victim demands an *Atwa* of admission. "We do not have such *Atwa* of inquiry in Yatta," said Abu Fannar. "It is either *Atwa* of admission or denial," he said.

Atwa of Retaliation

In this *Atwa*, one opponent claims that he has been beaten or has suffered more injuries than the other. Therefore, the one who suffered the least must begin the process of reconciliation. Each opponent will then appoint a neutral representative and the two representa-

Continued on page 15

Palestinian newspapers gave prominent coverage to the statements by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Cairo. Three daily newspapers supported the declaration. *Al Mithaq* opposed the declaration calling it an additional compromise to US and pro-US Arab countries.

The issue of the Nablus municipality was discussed in detail in all the Arab press this week. *Al Mithaq* daily and *Al Tali'a* weekly attacked the attempts of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce to take over the municipality. They called the attempt part of the autonomy scheme. *Al Fajr's* editorial on the subject said that if elections are impossible a unity coalition should be reached to take over the municipality. In their news coverage, *Al Quds* supported the idea while *Al Sha'ab* opposed it. The two papers didn't write an editorial on the subject.

Nablus Municipality

It has become clear that the Nablus Chamber of Commerce will take over the municipality there. Though this appointment transcends the basic right of citizens to either elect a council or to reinstate the dissolved one, there are daily problems that need attention. One of the suggested solutions was to form a temporary committee comprising unions and members of the elected council. The other was for the Chamber of Commerce to take over. It seems that the CC opted for the second solution. In contrast many institutions, personages and organizations in the city still see that the first solution – a committee – is the best in order to maintain national unity in the city. Though we wish that the elected council would be reinstated or at least new elections be held, we, nevertheless, strongly demand that national unity be preserved. Extreme care should be taken lest there be additional problems to the ones we already have.

AL FAJR
November 7

UNRWA Conspiracy

The agreement between UNRWA and Israel to demolish Ain al-Sultan and Aqbat Jabr camps in Jericho lies within the plan of liquidation. This liquidation plan will naturally take many forms and directions. What we would like to point out here is the attitude of UNRWA's headquarters toward our people. They started with reducing services to the refugees everywhere and ended up destroying the camps. This act has political connotations.

AL MITHAQ
November 8

Cairo Declaration

The Cairo declaration condemning all forms of terror is a clear and true assertion of the PLO's desire to give the peace efforts a chance to find a just and comprehensive settlement.

The declaration refutes the US's and Israel's charge that the PLO is a "gang of terrorist murderers," making it thus not qualified to participate in any peace negotiations. But after the declaration, do the US and Israel have any excuse? Israel backed by the US is trying to convince King Hussein to enter into direct negotiations for a separate peace with Jordan. This is something impossible. The Cairo talks also proved that it is impossible to exclude the PLO from any negotiations.

AL FAJR
November 9

Truthfulness and Credibility

Israeli official circles reacted to the Cairo declaration by simply saying they do not believe it. So, Israel has rejected the declaration outright. If anything, Israel still rejects the existence of the PLO. The Israeli rejection dates back to 1974 when the Arab world recognized the PLO as representative of the Palestinian people and the PLO renounced terror outside the occupied territories. Israel's insistence on total rejection of the PLO is the prime cause of its refusal to believe anything coming out from the PLO. Thus we may anticipate that even if the PLO accepts 242 and 338 and Israel's right to existence, Israeli official circles will state that this is only a maneuver by the PLO. Israel's position is backed by the US which declared that the Cairo declaration is not a major step in the peace process. This strategy is the main motive for the US and Israel when they rejected the many major steps taken by the PLO.

AL QUDS
November 9

US-USSR Agreement Necessary

The formula for solving the Palestinian problem is at a dead end locally. The Labor Party will not give any concessions unless Jordan agrees to enter negotiations without the PLO, or if the PLO agrees to UN Resolution 242. Jordan on the other hand cannot negotiate without the PLO. The PLO can't accept UN Resolution 242 unless Israel agrees beforehand to withdraw from all occupied territories and to accept the Palestinians' right to political self-determination.

All eyes must now be focused on an international initiative. Maybe a Soviet-American agreement will be able to hurdle this obstacle.

AL MAWQIF
November 9

The Only Way to Peace

The role played by the Egyptian leadership is an essential one. This Egyptian role cannot be separated from the role of Jordan and the PLO. Each of these three parties is performing a complementary role. The US and Israel have a common approach to peace. They work toward excluding the PLO and both are counting on driving a wedge in the Jordanian-Egyptian-Palestinian position. To achieve this they overestimate declarations and statements. While there appear to be differences in Israel, the official Israeli policy remains the same; it aims at drawing Jordan to a separate peace. But the continuation of the Jordanian-Palestinian-Egyptian unified stand will be the only way to achieve peace.

AL QUDS
November 11

The Syrian-Jordanian Reconciliation

The Jordanian Prime Minister Zayd al-Rifa'i is expected to visit Damascus today to resume the dialogue started in Jedda and Riyadh weeks ago. This visit comes amid rapid improvement in the relations between the two countries, especially after the message addressed by King Hussein to his prime minister regarding the causes of differences between Syria and Jordan. It seems that the relations of the two countries will enter a new stage through a meeting between Assad and Hussein probably this month. Arab reconciliation and solidarity have always been a Palestinian demand. The seriousness, effectiveness and fruitfulness of any Arab reconciliation is measured by its adherence to the Arab summit resolutions which assert the need to support the PLO as a sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Out of this conviction, any Arab reconciliation is welcomed. And it should be expanded to include the PLO.

AL SHA'AB
November 12

Arafat

Continued from page 1

against Israeli occupation in whatever way possible with the aim of an Israeli withdrawal from these lands. He also denounced all terrorist acts against civilians and called on the international community and peace loving forces to support the PLO in its step to help save the world from the terror phenomenon. He said the PLO was taking this step to help "liberate individuals from fear and protect them of danger because our goal in the end is to achieve a durable, just and comprehensive peace that would guarantee the stable national rights of the Palestinian people."

Flanked by President Mubarak, Arafat told the press conference that, "The PLO condemns and renounces all terrorist acts, whether those by countries or by individuals or groups against unarmed civilians in any place."

Arafat said that the PLO is reiterating its 1974 commitment to renounce all terrorist acts outside the occupied territories. The PLO chairman also asserted that the PLO leadership will take all punitive measures against any violators.

Arafat reportedly made the announcement after becoming convinced that acts outside the occupied territories would harm the Palestinian cause. The PLO chairman also reiterated his adherence to the Jordanian-Palestinian agreement and called for an international conference to be attended by the superpowers and all parties to the conflict including the PLO.

Reaction

On the same day as Arafat's declaration and at the end of a three-day visit to France, King Hussein welcomed Arafat's statement. He said, however, that the PLO would have to do far more to position itself as an "acceptable partner in peace" with Jordan. Hussein said that the PLO chairman would have to declare at an appropriate time PLO acceptance of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Israeli officials meanwhile dismissed the statement saying that they didn't believe it. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir called it "playing with words." Sources close to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said that, "Only a simpleton could believe Arafat."

The US State Department said the Cairo Declaration was not a significant step in the peace process. The US had earlier called on the PLO to renounce terrorism as a condition for a US-Palestinian dialoque. In his Cairo statement, Arafat made no reference to recognition of Israel, another condition set by the US as a basis for peace negotiations.

Three days later, in a television interview, Arafat said that received support for his statement from other Arab leaders. Arafat speaking on Abu Dhabi TV said that the Cairo Declaration was an authentic Palestinian statement, but that he had previously consulted Arab leaders, whom he met in his shuttle visit to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, the Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Yemen. Arafat added that, "The Cairo Declaration is a reply to the brutal campaign by the United States and Israel against the PLO."

Palestinian Reaction

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine at first supported the statement's content saying it too "rejects all forms of irresponsible acts of violence outside of the occupied territories that cause serious offense to the Palestinian national struggle." The DFLP later reiterated its commitment to all forms of armed struggle against the Israeli occupation and rejected the political implications of the Cairo Declaration. The PFLP *Al Hadaf* magazine, the official organ of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, condemned in its editorial Arrfat's visit to Cairo and the Cairo Declaration which it called "The most recent compromise offered by Arafat's leadership."

Radwan Abu Ayash, president of the Arab Journalists Association, said the declaration was "nothing new." He said, "Arafat reiterated the PLO's 1974 position which manifests the humanitarian and civilized nature of the PLO." Abu Ayash pointed to what he called "an official terrorism waged by the United States. This is apparent in the case of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro*." He was referring to the US capture of the plane transporting the hijackers.

Deportation

Continued from page 1

The three-member military panel, which convened at the Nablus Prison, confirmed the list of accusations presented by the Israeli military commander, defense lawyers told *Al Fajr*. A source at lawyer Lea Tsemel's office said that the committee heard secret material presented to it by the Israeli military authorities, and then came out in favor of the deportations. The defense lawyers were not allowed to see the evidence.

The committee asserted that the three men were involved in incitement activity. It also said that the three men had previously been put under town arrest, but that that was not effective.

The lawyer's committee defending the detainees has repeatedly rejected these claims and said that if the authorities have anything against their clients they should put them on trial. It also called for a medical team to check the condition of Dr. Azmi Shu'aibi who is suffering from tuberculosis. They wanted a ruling on whether or not his deportation would jeopardize his life. Earlier, a Hadassah Hospital physician who is treating Dr. Shu'aibi testified before the committee that his deportation would indeed endanger his life. Another medical committee, however, which was brought by the Israeli military authorities, reviewed the medical records and said that there was no danger to Shu'aibi's life.

Throughout the hearing, which went on into the night, the families of the three men maintained a sit-in in front of Nablus Prison.

The three-member military panel convened after the Israeli High Court cancelled an earlier interim order which barred the panel from discussing the cases of the three men. The defense lawyers obtained the order *nisi* after the committee refused to call the Israeli military commander of the West Bank to the witness stand. In cancelling the order *nisi*, the Israeli High Court said that the petitioners could not apply to them before hearing the findings of the Military Objections Committee.

The lawyers' committee defending the four men slated for deportation filed a petition with the Israeli High Court, November 13 objecting to the deportation. The Israeli court has not yet set a date for the hearing but lawyers expect it to take place next week. Lawyers say that the prospects for their clients are not good. In fact, a lawyer working in the office of lawyer Tsemel said that they are almost certain that the deportation will be carried out.

The Palestine Human Rights Campaign issued a statement in Washington expressing their stand against the deportation of Palestinians from the occupied territories. The PHRC statement also accused Israel of violating Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and called upon the US to "exert all possible pressure" on Israel to put an end to these practices.

The PHRC statement concluded by urging the US government to "seriously consider these grave violations of human rights [by Israel] and to take them into consideration when distributing foreign aid and military assistance to the government of Israel."

Meanwhile, local newspapers reported that solidarity protests with the four residents were organized in 15 cities in West Germany last week. The campaign involved signing petitions by dozens of local groups and parties protesting the planned deportation. Among many groups which signed the petitions were the Communist Party, the Green Party, the Socialist Youth in the German Social Democratic Party, the Jewish-Christian Association and others.

A total of 21 Palestinian residents, including 18 ex-political prisoners who were freed in the May prisoner swap between the PFLP-GC and Israel, were deported during the past two months. The second case of deportations included three West Bank men, who were driven to the Jordanian border under military guard and forced out.

Aqbat Jaber

Continued from page 1

the agency plans to carry out projects on the land once they have the needed funds.

According to UNRWA's statement the Israelis said in negotiating the demolition that the houses constitute a health hazard to the local inhabitants because of the large-scale deterioration of the huts. Camp residents, however, described the Israeli excuses as "ridiculous." "Do you really believe that Israel is willing to spend money on demolishing empty huts because they are concerned about our health?" one resident asked sarcastically, during a random survey of residents at Aqbat Jaber camp a day before the demolition.

Even though many people surveyed were unable to express themselves clearly, they all agreed that "the Israelis are planning something after this step." Taysir Said Kamal, 24, said that it made no sense for the Israelis to demolish the empty huts when no body complained to them. Kamal expressed fear that the demolition would be used as a prelude to expelling the residents from the camp. Kamal, who was among very few residents who was willing to be quoted by name, said that he was born in the camp and would not leave it except to return to his home village near Ramleh.

Hamadeh Salbad, an ex-political prisoner in his early 30s, asserted that residents' opposition to the demolition stemmed from both political and personal considerations. "The presence of the camp on the Jericho-Jerusalem road [which is always busy with tourist traffic] is a constant reminder to tourists of the Palestinian problem," he said. Salbad, who works as a private contractor, said that people are worried that this is the first step toward resettling refugees and demolition of the entire camp. He pointed out that the Israelis previously offered to move the refugees into housing projects for free but they refused. Salbad also said that the house demolition curtails any further expansion of the camp, especially in the case of sons getting married in the future.

A 96-year-old man, originally from the village of al-Qibab near Jaffa, said that, "Israel does not have any right whatsoever to demolish or build anything. But what can we do? They have the power to do whatever they want."

A local journalist also expressed his opposition to demolishing the shelters, even the deteriorating ones. "Would you call for demolishing Auschwitz [concentration camp] because there are no people in it, or because it is old?" he asked.

PLO Executive Committee member Muhammad Milhem condemned the razing of parts of the two camps, when speaking to the Agence France Press in Amman. Milhem said that this demolition proves that the peace that Shimon Peres is talking about is the "peace of the bulldozer."

The Israeli drive to get rid of Arab inhabitants of the Jordan Valley which began with the Israeli occupation of the West Bank in 1967 intensified in recent months. Last July, the Israeli authorities razed Nwe'meh refugee camp, also near Jericho, under a similar arrangement with UNRWA.

THE PALESTINIAN NEEDLEWORK PROGRAM

is having a RENOVATION SALE

November 18 – December 5
30% reduction
on all items

HOURS: 8 A. M. – 7 P. M.
MONDAY – SATURDAY

LOCATION: MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE
79 NABLUS ROAD
(ACROSS AMBASSADOR HOTEL)
P. O. BOX 19208
EAST JERUSALEM

Achille Lauro

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the issue itself would not be sound reasoning.

It is too early for Arabs and their allies to start celebrating the long awaited victory over the hearts and minds of the American media; yet there were editorials and opinions by known commentators published in major American papers immediately following the end of the hijacking of the *Achille Lauro*, which spoke objectively about the Middle East issue. The main premise behind these articles is that there is no military solution to the Middle East conflict, and that the solution will come only through a process of negotiations. Those opinion holders also argued that the PLO must play a role in the peace process, and that the US must talk to that organization, now more than ever before.

In covering the Middle East conflict, few experts would argue that the American media is totally neutral, and that there is no bias in favor of Israel. The question then becomes who, if anyone, is to blame for that bias and how to overcome it. Jim Zogby, for example, argues that the best analogy to determine the bias or the neutrality of the American media's coverage of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict would have been a look at how the American media dealt with the assassination of Alex Odeh, ADC regional director on the West coast, and how it handled the killing of Klinghoffer of the *Achille Lauro*. That, however, is a different subject to be handled on a different occasion.

November 6, 1985

TWO ISRAELIS INJURED

An Israeli sustained serious injuries when he was shot near Biddu village, north of Jerusalem. Israel Radio reported that the shots were fired by an Arab when the Israeli's car had to stop at a roadblock.

EXPLOSIVE CHARGE GOES OFF

An Israeli military spokesperson stated that an explosive charge went off near Giv'at Ze'ev settlement at the Ramallah-Latrun junction. No injuries were reported.

SETTLERS PROVOKE ARAB DRIVERS

A number of Arab drivers operating in al-Arqoub village area near Bethlehem reported that settlers from Hadar Bitar settlement established on Husan village land began to harass the Arab drivers by crowding them off the road which is narrow and dangerous.

JALAZON RESIDENT DETAINED

The Israeli authorities recently released Izat Sahiya, a Jalazon resident, after 45 days in custody. Three days later the authorities rearrested him and ordered him administratively detained. He supports a family of 5.

HADASSAH HOSPITAL WON'T TREAT WB PATIENTS

The administration of Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem decided not to admit patients referred to it by West Bank hospitals. The decision was taken because of financial problems between the two sides.

JAIL SENTENCES

The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced 22-year-old Samir Abd al-Qader al-Shahrawi and 23-year-old Abd al-Hamid al-Ashrafi to 2 years in prison and 1 year suspended. They were charged with possessing explosives.

In Nablus the military court was presented with charge sheets against nine youths of Silat a-Harthiya accused of causing damage to Israeli settlements and farms. The hearing was postponed until next month. In Nablus court also charge sheets were submitted against Na'im Tanbur for membership in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and training in the use of arms, and against Mahmoud Da'ass, a Najah University student, for membership in Fatah. The hearing was set for December 11, 1985.

CURFEW

The authorities imposed a curfew on Balatta refugee camp following the stoning of Israeli vehicles.

ISRAELIS CULTIVATE NAHALIN LAND

The Israeli Karen Kayement Company planted Nahalin land, west of Bethlehem, with trees. The land in question is 800 dunums. It was learned that the villagers went to the land and confronted the Israeli workers. This land is planted with olive trees and grapevines.

November 7, 1985

BOMB EXPLODES IN KFAR SABA

A bomb went off in the central bus station in the Israeli town of Kfar Saba causing no casualties, Israel Radio reported. No other details were given.

DURA YOUTHS GET HEAVY SENTENCES

An Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced 6 youths from Dura village in the Hebron area to various prison terms on security charges.

Nasser Ibrahim Salameh Amr was sentenced to 10 years in prison; Abdel Aziz Salameh Amr, 9 years in prison; Odet Allah Hussein Amr, 5 years in prison; Mahmoud Ali al-Rajoub, 4 years in prison and Akram Jubran al-Rajoub and Abdel Aziz Salem al-Rajoub, 10 years each.

The court also sentenced Lutfi Jaber Abu Ulya, of al-Magheir village, to 1.5 years in prison and 1.5 years suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization.

November 8, 1985

52,500 SETTLERS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

The number of Jewish settlers residing in the West Bank has increased by 10,000 over the past year, raising the total Jewish population in the occupied areas to 52,500, according to a study published by an Israeli researcher.

However, officials in the Jewish council of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip say they believe that the figures are not accurate because there are more than 60,000 settlers living in the territories.

November 10, 1985

SUR BAHER LOSES 1000 DUNUMS

Israeli bulldozers have begun working on land belonging to the village of Sur Baher, south of Jerusalem, following a decision to confiscate the 1000-dunum plot. In the late 60s, the same village lost 2400 dunums as a result of confiscation.

Women and children indicate their belief in eventual victory as they stand amidst the rubble of their home in the Jerusalem suburb of al-Ram. Authorities demolished the home on the pretext of having no license.

80 DETAINEES MOVED

Eighty out of 90 Palestinian administrative detainees were recently transferred from West Bank prisons to Beer Sheba Prison, the Israeli *HaAretz* newspaper reported.

NABLUS YOUTHS JAILED

An Israeli military court in Nablus sentenced Jihad Abdel Jalil Dweikat, 19, of Arrak al-Tayeh village, to 5 months in prison and 7 months suspended on security charges.

The court also sentenced Ibrahim Darwish Abu Ayyash, 20, of Balatta refugee camp, to 4 months in prison and 3 months suspended on charges of stone-throwing.

L.A. MAYOR MEETS FREIJ

Visiting Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley called on Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij and discussed with him the current situation in the occupied territories and efforts to solve the Palestinian problem.

GAZANS JAILED

An Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced Ihab Adnan Dabo to 4 years in prison and 1 year suspended and Mahmoud Hassan al-Kanu' to 3 years in prison and 1.5 years suspended. The two, who are residents of Jabalya refugee camp, were charged with membership in a Palestinian organization, preparing molotov cocktails and writing (anti-Israeli) graffiti.

The court also sentenced Muhammad Zaki Assam, also from Jabalya, to 8 months in prison and 28 months suspended. He was charged with membership in a Palestinian organization and distributing leaflets.

TAMUN YOUTH JAILED

An Israeli military court in Jenin sentenced Walid Abdullah Bani Odeh, 21, of Tamum village, to 1.5 years in prison and 2.5 years suspended on charges of membership in a Palestinian organization, demonstrating and carrying out a molotov attack.

November 11, 1985

POLICE PATROLS STEPPED UP IN J'LEM

Israeli border police troops stepped up their patrols in the Old City of Jerusalem following Sunday's stabbing attack against an Israeli soldier as he strolled together with his girlfriend through the city's narrow alleyways.

Hundreds of Arab residents were stopped for routine checks. Five youths who were found to be in possession of knives were arrested for questioning.

FARMERS PLOW LAND SLATED FOR CONFISCATION

Farmers in Nahalin village southwest of Bethlehem plowed their 400-dunum plot, which is located near Giva't Nahal settlement. Authorities have more than once hinted that they intend to confiscate the land.

November 12, 1985

NAHALIN IMAM KILLED IN EXPLOSION

The *Imam* (preacher) of the Nahalin village mosque in the Bethlehem area was killed Monday night when an explosive charge he was preparing went off, the Israeli news agency *Itim* reported. No other details were given.

ADMINISTRATIVE DETENTIONS UPHELD

An Israeli military court upheld administrative detention orders against 3 residents of the West Bank. The 3 — Khalil Ashour, a student at an-Najah University; Kamel Hameid, a student at Bethlehem University; and Jerusalem unionist Hussein al-Faqha' — were jailed for 6 months without trial after military authorities alleged they were "security risks".

AMERICAN CONSUL ROBBED

Thieves broke into the home of the US Consul-General in Jerusalem and made off with a great deal of jewelry, police reported. The residence is located near the southern district police headquarters in Ras al-Amoud.

2 GAZA WOMEN JAILED

Two women from Gaza were sentenced to prison and a fine by an Israeli military court on charges of security offenses. Samira Muhammad al-Mahaida, 24, was given 2 months in prison and 1 year suspended on charges of contacting a Palestinian organization and providing services. Jamileh Husef Dawwas, 40, was given a 3-month suspended sentence and fined IS50,000 on charges of possessing a hand grenade.

The same court sentenced Muhammad Mahmoud Zakout, 22, also from Gaza, to a IS750,000 fine on charges of possessing inflammatory material.

RED CROSS DIRECTOR VISITS DHEISHEH

The new director of the Red Cross in the West Bank, Patrick Fund, visited Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem and listened to residents' complaints about problems facing adminstrative detainees from the camp and the situation in the camp.

The White Paper

Continued from page 5

The section on military actions in the booklet is so small and weak that it virtually destroys the entire argument. In trying to pin violent actions on Arafat's Fatah in Europe, the evidence presented is a claim that an alleged Fatah member was arrested in February for possession of explosives in Frankfurt, another in Rome in July for carrying forged documents, and two more in Madrid in July for carrying explosives. No attribution is given to these items, nor are we told whether they belonged to Arafat loyalists or dissidents.

Two charts are provided showing attacks in Israel and attacks outside Israel. The chart for attacks outside Israel lists attacks on Israelis and other Jews, Palestinians and other Arab targets, and others. Whereas the total number of attacks are shown to have increased, the attacks against Israeli or Jewish targets do not show a substantial increase. More importantly, we are not told who carried out the attacks. No indication is made that the attacks were carried out by the PLO or pro-Arafat supporters whom the booklet attempts to single out.

If anything this latest Israeli propaganda sheet called *The Threat of PLO Terrorism* is nothing more than a reflection of Israeli frustration over the PLO's political strategy. It is this Israeli discomfort with the Palestinian strategy that shows that Arafat's peace is much more threatening to Israel than his violence. In this context, Arafat's strong statements in Cairo in opposition to acts against civilians and outside the occupied territories carry much weight. It is high time that nations of the world support the Palestinian goals of peace and justice rather than the forces of occupation and state terrorism. ■

Daoud Kuttab is the managing editor of Al Fajr *Weekly.*

Calendar of Events

Readers are invited to advertise events free of charge: Wednesdays are the deadline for publication in the next issue.

November 15

Theater: *A Chosen Neighborhood.* The Jerusalem Al-Jawwal group once again presents this play at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater, Jerusalem, 5:30 p.m. In Arabic. Telephone: 280957, 288189.

November 21

Music: Homage to Bach with Varda Nishry — piano, at the Lutheran Redeemer Church, Jerusalem, 8:30 p.m. Telephone: 282543.

November 23

Music: After long years in exile, Mustafa el-Kurd has returned to his birthplace, Jerusalem. He will be giving a concert at the Nuzha/el-Hakawati Theater, 6:30 p.m.

EVENTS IN EUROPE

November 30

Special Day: The French NGO Coordinating Committee will sponsor a special day at the Mutualite Center in Paris, entitled "Problems facing young Palestinians." Between 2:00-8:00 p.m.

EVENTS IN THE US

November 10 — December 15

Music: Marcel Khalife and Al-Mayadeen will be doing a concert tour of the United States and Canada. All proceeds will go toward supplies and materials for hospitals and health facilities in south Lebanon, as well as toward rebuilding Palestinian refugee camps. The scheduled dates are as follows: Nov. 23 — Austin, Tx., Nov. 24 — Houston, Tx., Nov. 29 — San Diego, Ca., Nov. 30 — Los Angeles, Ca., Dec. 1 — San Francisco, Ca., Dec. 6 — Portland, Oregon, Dec. 8 — Denver, Colorado, Dec. 13 — Washington, D.C., Dec. 14 — Boston, Dec. 15 — New York City. Readers should watch for further information in their areas regarding concert locations and times.

November 19 — December 9

Exhibit: "Beyond Arabesque," an exhibit featuring nine contemporary artists from Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Algeria, Iraq and Morocco, at the Alif Gallery, Washington, D.C.

November 20

Lecture: Dr. Bassam Tibi, professor of international relations at the University of Gottingen in West Germany, will present a lecture, "Islam as a Cultural System: Islamic Articulatory Practice and the Challenge of Social Change," at CCAS, Georgetown University, Washington.

Palestinian Sulha

Continued from page 11

tives decide the degree of loss to each party.

White Atwa

This is *Atwa* with no payment. Judges or members of the *Jaha* do not like such *Atwa*, especially in the case of murder. Yet it is used if the *Jaha* are unable to bring the different points of views of the opponents closer. For instance, if the family of the victim does not like the conditions of the *Atwa* or has plans to kill the killer, then they will refuse to take any money and under the pressure of the *Jaha* will agree to give *Atwa Baida* or white *Atwa*.

No Atwa

If a person is known to be of a criminal nature or commits a lot of crimes like robbery, murder, treason, or adultery, then his family declares that all his relatives have no responsibility for his actions. Yet the declaration must be made before he commits another crime and it should be declared in three public meetings attended by heads of several families and prominent figures and published in local newspapers.

If the family does so, then it is exempted from any responsibility. For such a person there is no *Atwa*. For example, if a collaborator is killed for political reasons, his family will not seek revenge or demand compensation. Last August, suspected collaborator Abdullah Sous and his brothers opened fire on the Ja'abis family and seriously wounded three persons. The incident took place following a heated debate between the Sous brothers and a member in the Ja'abis family in Sawahreh over a goat killed by Sous. A month later, one of the injured — Omar Abed Ja'abis, 20 — died from his wounds. Immediately after the incident Sawahreh residents demanded that Sous and his family leave the area. Instead, a large number of Israeli soldiers posted guard around Sous' house. No *Atwa* was given and Hebronite *Jaha* members were asked to put pressure on Sous to leave Sawahreh. He refused, still depending on the protection of Israeli authorities.

During the funeral procession and in presence of Israeli soldiers, Sawahreh residents smashed all the windows and doors of Sous' house. Israeli authorities tried in vain to convince the people to begin the process of reconcilation, but Sawahreh residents and *mukhtars* refused.

When Israeli soldiers stopped offering protection to Sous, his family left Sawahreh and in an attempt to show that he was benevolent transferred his house to the *Waqf*.

Jamil Salhout, a journalist from Sawahreh, told *Al Fajr* that Sous sent mediators saying that he was ready to pay JD50,000, (US 125,000 dollars) as compensation. Salhout said however that tribal law does not apply to traitors.

Similarly, when Muhammad Nasr, a Village Leaguer in Hebron, killed Daoud Atawneh in Beit Kahel, the village residents did not make *Sulha* with Nasr.

A resident in Abu Dis recalled an incident that took place in a village in the Hebron area at the time of British mandate rule. He said that two brothers were living in a village. One of them was killed and the family of the killer did not make *Atwa* with the victim's brother. Hence the brother of the victim decided to take revenge. He bought a gun and left the village. At night, he waged several attacks against the family of the killer fatally wounding several. Realizing that he was the mysterious attacker, *Jaha* members rushed to take *Atwa* for him. ■

[To be continued next week.]

Peace Now

Continued from page 10

in Tel Aviv calling for a commission of inquiry to be set up to investigate Israeli complicity in the massacres. Begin backed down from his original refusal and appointed a judicial commission. Three months later, it delivered its recommendations, the most controversial of which was the removal of Sharon from the Defense Ministry.

Bar-On writes: "Begin seemed to be hesitant: was he really obliged to implement the recommendations? Sharon began to fight for his position and created a kind of 'putsch' atmosphere by exploiting the public's natural sympathy for the Israeli army and its officers. The hours passed and the government avoided taking a decision. Its supporters began organizing, calling on the government to ignore the inquiry commission's findings. The Labor Party's appeal to the government to immediately implement the commission's findings were drowned out in the hysterical tumult of populist support for the minister of defense. This time the issue wasn't confined to the question of the war in Lebanon and the responsibility for the actions and setbacks thereof; it touched on the very existence of Israeli democracy." (p. 62)

In February 1983, PN's adherence to the "rules of the game" was becoming a radicalizing factor. Bar-On quotes Israeli novelist Shulamit Hareven's account of the Jerusalem protest march of PN demanding that Begin implement the commission's findings: "Even as the demonstration moved out of Zion Square and started up Ben Yehuda Street, it was clear that it wasn't the usual confrontation between different views. Nor was it a routine display of fringe violence. Even before the PN supporters had gathered, organized gangs of roughs and thugs were laying in wait for them. And now, they start driving a wedge into the ranks of the demonstrators, using a great deal of force to try to halt [the progress of the march]. There's a lot of catcalls, whistles, blows, a lot of blows. Total bedlam... The march moves forward. Slowly. Amiram gets hit in the face by a lit cigarette. Anat is badly beaten. Later, a thug tries to put a burning torch out on Talia Ziv's face... This isn't the usual riff-raff; somebody organized them. The dominant feeling here today is that the street is on the verge of civil war."

Minutes after the demonstration ended, somebody threw a grenade at the demonstrators, killing one person and injuring six others. Unsatisfied by the carnage, Sharon's bully-boys followed the ambulances to the hospital after unsuccesfully trying to prevent them from driving away from the scene, and there began punch-ups in the corridors.

As the situation began to slip beyond his control, Begin was left with little choice but to order Sharon's dismissal from the post of minister of defense. The Labor Party claimed it as its victory. Meanwhile, the supporters of PN were in shock.

Leaving aside the question of whether Israel was actually on the verge of civil war in February 1983, the very notion of civil war could not fail to undercut the ideological foundations of the Zionist establishment. PN leaders joined the leaders of both the Labor Alignment and the Likud in calling for tolerance and reconciliation, but the rank and file supporters of the movement began to question themselves about "who their real enemy was?"

In the months that followed, PN began drifting further to the left, at least until the 1984 elections and the formation of the national unity government, which is where Bar-On concludes his account.

In its seven years of existence, PN has experienced periods of radicalization which have regularly been followed by its capitulation to the Labor Party and long dormant stretches. Nevertheless, it has become the dominant force among the progressive sector of the Israeli public. During its periods of radicalization, PN has overcome its reluctance to swim against the current and has even put forward radical demands. It has likewise been instrumental in bringing human rights violations in the occupied territories to the attention of the Israeli public. Yet, by international standards, PN is not a peace movement and should not be identified as such. Nuclear disarmament, anti-militarism and the linkage of peace to domestic social change are foreign concepts to the PN mainstream.

The movement's future direction, and even the question of whether it has a future, is at present uncertain. PN has avoided taking a clear position in regard to what form the "partition of the Land of Israel" — which it calls for — should take and have thus laid the movement open to the manipulation of the Labor Party in its present bid to reach a *modus vivendi* [practical arrangement; way of life — ed.] with King Hussein over the heads of the Palestinians in the occupied territories. But as to what exactly the future holds in store, no one seems to be certain, least of all the members of PN. ■

Israel's Recession Forces Unemployment Up

by Michael Lowry

Over the past four months, Israel's "emergency program for the stabilization of the economy" has achieved most of its immediate objectives: real wages have been cut by 25 percent, prices have stabilized and the trade balance is improving. By driving the Israeli economy into a recession, the Peres government has succeeded in checking the country's rampant inflation.

The mainstay of the austerity program is the erosion of real wages and accompanying redistribution of national resources in favor of capital. This is intended to generate a climate favorable to investment and economic growth without recourse to inflationary measures. Yet in lieu of any concrete plan for initiating growth beyond the incentive of cheap labor, the government's prognosis of an imminent "economic recovery" appears to be no more than wishful thinking, the stuff monetarist daydreams are made of.

When the program was introduced on July 1 of this year, its architects went to great lengths to congratulate themselves for having designed an austerity program that avoided the bane of similar deflationary programs in Western Europe and North America, namely mass unemployment – a situation which monetarists have proved adept at creating and incapable of alleviating. The government set a 7.5 percent ceiling on unemployment beyond which it vowed not to venture and the traditionally pliable Histadrut labor federation, after a perfunctory show of opposition, acquiesced to the plan on the understanding that by doing so it was "saving jobs".

At present, according to official statistics, 8.5 percent of the labor force is unemployed. In the next few months, the figure is expected to top the 10 percent mark (150,000 unemployed) and many economists are forecasting that it will reach 15 percent (200,000 unemployed) by the spring of 1986.

JEWISH WORKERS ARE UNWILLING TO WORK FOR THE WRETCHED WAGES PALESTINIANS HAVE HAD TO ACCEPT.

As a rule, unemployment tends not to be equally shared: it bears particularly heavily on youth, women, "foreign" laborers and particular localities and regions. Israeli unemployment is not an exception. Forty percent of the unemployed are concentrated in the frontier towns in the north and south of the country. Set up in the 50s and early 60s to absorb the massive influx of immigrants from the Arab countries, these towns are euphemistically referred to in Zionist discourse as "development towns" yet are actually pockets of poverty, underdevelopment and neglect. The persistently high levels of unemployment in these towns have been greatly exacerbated by the current recession.

"When 15 or 20 percent [of the population] is totally unemployed and many others are partially unemployed, when being on welfare comes to be taken for granted, when 10-20 percent of the wage earners require income supplements, there's little left to say or analyze. We are on the verge of an explosion," Dimona Mayor Eli Hileli is quoted as saying in *Al Hamishmar* (November 1, 1985).

Occupied Territories Labor

Palestinian workers from the occupied territories have also been hard hit by the current wave of mass lay-offs in Israel. They are neither protected by the Histadrut nor eligible for unemployment or social welfare payments. Eighteen years of occupation have virtually strangled West Bank and Gaza industry and massive land confiscations have robbed the agricultural population of alternative sources of income.

The availability of cheap labor from the occupied territories over the past decade and a half has brought about a situation in which many Israeli construction firms and food and textile plants (which employ roughly 35 percent of the West Bank and Gaza labor force working in Israel) have resisted reinvesting their profits in modern equipment in order to turn over quick profits. This in turn has made for a decrease in productivity. To cite one example, in 1973 it took 17.8 months to build an apartment as compared to 24.3 months in 1984. At present, the construction sector is in the throes of a severe crisis brought on by falling productivity, high interest rates and a freeze on government building.

Both the government and the Histadrut are interested in shifting unemployment out of Israel and into the occupied territories by hiring Jews in place of West Bank and Gaza Palestinians. However, Jewish workers are unwilling to work for the wretched wages Palestinian workers have had to accept; in many cases, welfare offers a more lucrative income. Furthermore, Israeli capitalists whose firms are built on cheap Arab labor are not likely to agree to slimming their profit margin by hiring members of the Histadrut who have higher income expectations than workers from the occupied territories.

The readiness of unskilled Palestinian workers from the occupied territories to accept low wages and their willingness to commute long distances has allowed them to find alternative employment more easily than most of their Israeli counterparts, particularly those living in "development" towns. However, it has also generated a lot of resentment among unemployed Jewish workers who accuse them of undercutting their salaries and "stealing their jobs".

The resentment is even easier to understand when one realizes the fact that unemployment *within* the occupied territories is reckoned, in lieu of any official statistics, to be in the vicinity of 15-20 percent of the labor force but is rarely alluded to in Israel.

In a general sense, unemployment represents a waste of resources: the economy is producing below its potential capacity and so the total output of goods and services is less than it could be and everyone is worse off than they need be. It is readily becoming apparent in Israel that mass unemployment is creating greater social tension and stress than soaring inflation, from which wage earners were relatively protected by a wage index system.

At present, approximately 120,000 Israelis are unemployed; their chances of finding jobs in the near future are slim. And even if they do find work, decent wages are hard to come by.

As wages fall, more and more wage-earners have begun to file requests for income supplements from the National Insurance Institute because their incomes fall below the minimum wage. At the beginning of November, National Insurance employees went out on strike to demand the hiring of 200-300 employees to help deal with the deluge of welfare applicants who can't survive on their meager incomes.

Young people coming out of the army are faced with a situation in which work is scarce. Israel's disastrous three-year-long war in Lebanon has generated a good deal of disillusionment among the young, and the prospect of yearly 30-60 day stints of reserve military service coupled with the current lack of employment opportunities have made emigration seem the only viable alternative to many young people.

The cynicism and indifference of the government to human suffering has emerged time and time again over the past months, whether in regard to the elderly, whose pensions have been drastically cut; the infirm and sick, who have been forced to live in poverty and squalor because of cuts in the Health Ministry budget; and the lower strata of the population, which is rapidly sinking below the poverty line.

The "operation" may have been successful, as the architects of the austerity program claimed at the beginning of November, but the patient is dying nonetheless. Or perhaps, as a direct result thereof.

In the words of *Jerusalem Post* economic editor Meir Merhav, "Recession is a road to nowhere. It is a recipe for greater dependence on foreign aid; and the mass unemployment associated with it spells unnecessary human suffering and economic, social, and political self-destruction. It will drive thousands to emigrate and tens of thousands into the arms of Meir Kahane" (August 9, 1985).

The chronic imbalance between the resources at Israel's disposal and its demands on them are first and foremost the result of Israel's defense burden, one which to quote Merhav again "is such as to jeopardize the country's security. A nation that relies on a reserve army and that cannot provide its young men and women with jobs after their compulsory military service, but also fires their parents as well, will find huge arsenals of sophisticated military hardware a fragile defense for its survival. Until the political struggle for a policy of peace and socio-economic struggle are seen to be one and the same, the political doves will never get the support of those hurt by policies designed to compensate for the consequences of maintaining Israel as a fortress; those who oppose social iniquities will never prevail until they realize that their root is in the myths of a Greater Israel and in the illusions and delusions of power" (*Jerusalem Post*, July 26, 1985). ■

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